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A
DEFENCE
OF
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES,

AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

IN REPLY TO

A PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

"Scripture the only Guide to Religious Truth ;"

OR,

"A NARRATIVE OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF A

SOCIETY OF BAPTISTS,

IN YORK,

IN RELINQUISHING THE

POPULAR SYSTEMS OF RELIGION, &c."

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS TO MR. D. EATON.

BY THE REV. JOHN GRAHAM,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY, BISHOPHILL SEN. AND OF
ST. SAVIOUR, YORK;

AND CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. EARL BATHURST.

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DEFENCE
OF
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES

AS PUBLISHED BY THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

A. L. M. H. I. S. T.



TO THE PUBLIC.

AFTER the many excellent Publications which have been called forth, from time to time, in vindication of the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, it will be necessary for me to state the principal reasons which induced me to send the following sheets into the world.

1. I do not recollect to have seen any work of ordinary size, and cheap price, which treats upon *all** the subjects here necessary to be discussed, in a way calculated for popular use.

* Amidst the numerous convincing Tracts that have been written in defence of detached Doctrines, I here take the opportunity of recommending to my Reader's perusal, two published a few years ago at Leeds; the one entitled "a short Defence of the Divinity of Christ"; the other, "a short Defence of the Atonement of Christ."

2. Many persons, when any of these important Doctrines are assailed, do not know what Books to enquire for ; they, therefore, either sit down with bad impressions upon their minds, or else, more usually, increase those impressions, by being led to apprehend, after an unsuccessful search, that no satisfaction is to be had.

3. Old books, especially if they be in any measure of a controversial nature, are seldom read ; because they are old, and because they are supposed to be suited only to the occasion for which they were written.

4. Such being the restless perseverance of the enemies of Orthodox principles, that without having offered satisfactory arguments in reply to the able Defences which have been made for these principles, they perpetually bring forward their sentiments as if they had never been answered : The only method left us, of counteracting their pernicious attempts, seems to be, to follow up

each successive Publication of any weight,
with an appropriate reply.

— Demo unum, demo etiam unum,

Dum cadat.

Hos.

5. Although this little WORK has kept the NARRATIVE, to which it was intended to be a reply, closely in view ; yet I have endeavoured so to frame it, that it may, upon the whole, be perfectly intelligible to those who have not seen that publication. Moreover, since the subjects of it are the most important Doctrines of Religion; and since, in replying to the Narrative, I have in some measure, met the principal part of popular objections and reasonings which occur in other Socinian writers upon these subjects ; it may, in the absence of something more excellent, be not without its use in the hands of serious orthodox Christians in general.

It must be confessed that in these “perilous times,” when the enemies of Truth and

Order are so determined in their purpose, and so indefatigable in their labours to subvert the mild and tolerating religious Establishment of their country, and to abolish those sublime and essential Truths which it is the glory of that Establishment to maintain, and its sacred Duty to preserve and perpetuate ; such a Manual cannot be unseasonable, as is in any degree calculated to guard the minds of men, “ lest any one spoil them through Philosophy, and vain deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of this World, and not after Christ.” *

4 OC 58

JOHN GRAHAM,

YORK, April 6th, 1800.

* Col. ii. 8.



(2)

LETTER I.

Mr. D. EATON,

I HAVE perused with attention the Letters lately published under your name, and as the subjects on which they treat are of the utmost importance, I have thought it a duty to make such remarks upon them as the word of God seemed to warrant: I entirely approve of your principle, that the Scriptures are our guide to truth; for the very idea of a Revelation from God, calls for an entire and implicit regard and assent on our part.

I cannot, however, agree with you in considering the holding or rejecting the Doctrines in question, as no more than matter of "mere opinion."* All the Doctrines of the Gospel are of a practical nature; that is, they call for some correspondent affection or conduct in us.

* Preface to Narrative, page 6.

Between you who deny these doctrines, and us who receive them, there can be no compromise. You cannot reject them, if true; we cannot hold them, if false, with impunity. One party must be blasphemers, or the other idolaters.

The order in which I shall consider the contents of such of your letters, as require distinct notice, shall be nearly the reverse of yours.—Your plan of demolition is, first to throw down the superstructure, then to dig up the foundations; I shall first shew that the foundation standeth sure, and then prove that the fair edifice of faith and holiness, and heavenly hope is safely erected upon it.

Before I enter upon this my proposed design, there are four things to be premised.

1st. It is necessary to guard against an improper impression which may be made upon the minds of your readers, in the very commencement of your Publication. In the greater part of pages 2. and 3. you labour to shew, how prone we are to give an implicit consent to "our Father's Creed," and in page 7th of your Preface you remark "that no length of time can sanctify error, nor can any arguments from numbers be conclusive." Granted; and let us

add, that truth is no less venerable because it has stood the test of seventeen centuries ; has repelled the attacks of its enemies in every age ; has overcome (at a time when unsupported by temporal power or interest) the strongest prejudices ; and has received from time to time the sincere, disinterested testimony of the greatest, steadiest, best of men. Surely it can be no disgrace to the Doctrines you oppose, so supported, to have numbers on their side. The majority is not always in the wrong ; nor does it necessarily follow that "through blind prejudice, "or interested views they harden their minds "against conviction and scrupulously avoid enquiry." * There are very considerable numbers to be found in the kingdom, to whom Religion appears to be the first concern of life ; who did not once think and believe as they do now in Religion ; who are desirous not to be deceived ; who have well weighed the matter, and who are firmly fixed, by conviction, in that Faith which you labour to destroy.

2d. It is expedient to adjust the Rule by which the Holy Scriptures are to be interpreted. Now it has been unanimously admitted, I think, by the best Critics, that in all cases, we must take the literal sense of Scripture, except

* Page 6th of Preface.

when the meaning of a passage so taken would be manifestly absurd, and repugnant to the analogy of Scripture. Thus when our Lord says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World; again, I leave the World and go to the Father," I see no reason why I should not understand him literally: I therefore so understand him. But when he says to his Disciples, "I am the Vine, ye are the Branches;" the absurdity of understanding him literally is self-evident. Many passages of the word of God are however figurative, and a question of much importance arises; how are we to interpret such passages, that we may arrive at the precise meaning of the writer? We may either understand too much, or too little by them. The Popish interpretation of Matt. xxvi. 26, in which they understand a figurative speech literally, has evidently given birth to their monstrous doctrine of Transubstantiation: and when you say, that Christ's declaration to his Disciples; that they as Branches cannot bear fruit, except they abide in him as the Vine, only means the * "holiness of life and usefulness of conduct that *his Gospel* would produce in them *if they did not abandon it,*" you seem to have destroyed altogether the force and intention of the figure.

Quintilian, the great Master in true Rhetoric and sound Criticism, observes, “*that Metaphor is never properly introduced, but when it is necessary through want of a proper term, or when it is more significant or more ornamental than a proper term.” Admitting this rule to be just, it will follow, that if we understand a Metaphorical Term so, as that no evident relation shall exist between it, as a Metaphor, and the proper idea we apprehend it is intended to convey, we either offer violence to the figure, or the writer who has adopted it introduces it improperly. Let us then return to the passage just quoted: You understand that when Christ speaks of himself, he does not mean himself, but “his Gospel or Doctrine,” and that the Branches abiding in him, are “persons who do not abandon his Doctrine.” Now I would ask, where is the obvious relation between a man’s espousing certain Doctrines, and a Branch united to a Tree? Was such a mode of speech necessary to supply the place of a literal phrase not to be found? Is it more significant, or more ornamental? There are others who believe that there exists a spiritual union between Christ and Believers, by virtue of which they “receive out of his fulness, grace for grace.” † In their application of the metaphor, there is a strong

* Lib. viii. Cap. 6. Page 86, Parisiis.

† John i. 16.

and manifest relation: As the branch if not
 * severed from the Vine, derives sap from the
 parent-stem, and is fruitful; so the believer
 united to Christ by faith, derives from him
 supplies of Grace, which enable him to bring
 forth much fruit. Can there be a doubt whe-
 ther of these interpretations is, according to the
 rule above-mentioned, better entitled to be
 received as the true one?

This mode of interpretation will decide be-
 tween us, in the course of my remarks upon
 the meanings you have given to some other
 passages.

3d. On a review of your Publication, it appears,
 that although a considerable part of your se-
 cond Letter is employed for the purpose of
 over-throwing the belief of the inability of man,
that is by no means the only letter in which this
 subject is introduced. The absurd, unjust and
 unnatural consequences, which you conclude
 must necessarily follow, if human inability be
 admitted, are urged against almost every prac-
 tical doctrine we hold, and are recurred to
 again and again, as exhibiting a fundamental
 error in our system. Take the following quo-

* The Greek word rendered "without," might be read
 "apart from" or, as the margin has it, "severed" from the Vine.

tations : “ They (the Israelites) were avowedly
 “ destroyed for their disobedience and unbelief ;
 “ but if they *could not believe nor obey*, that
 “ would have been a plea sufficient in their
 “ favour with a merciful and compassionate
 “ God.”* “ The New Testament Preachers
 “ never, in plain terms, assert the radical cor-
 “ ruption of man, so that he cannot be influ-
 “ enced by motives to do any thing good, any
 “ more than a dead man can rise and walk ; this
 “ doctrine is a gross reflection upon the Deity,
 “ as well as a libel upon Human Nature.” †
 “ Come unto me all ye that are weary and
 “ heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your
 “ souls,” &c. “ Ye will not come unto me
 “ that ye might have life.” Upon these pas-
 “ sages you observe, “ We could not see the
 “ propriety of this manner of speaking, without
 “ supposing men *could* come to him, and *could*
 “ believe on him.” ‡ “ We could not think that
 “ the Sacred Writers would say, he that be-
 “ lieveth not shall not see life, but the wrath
 “ of God abideth on him, &c. &c. if men were
 “ *not able to believe*. This would be condemning
 “ men for not doing *what was not in their*
 “ *power to do*. With these views we could
 “ not consider God either good or just.” § “ It

* Page 28 of Narrative.

† Ibid. Note Page 35. ‡ Page 39. || Page 39 and 40.

“ is contrary to all our ideas of the perfection
 “ of God, to suppose he would place or suffer
 “ his creatures to be brought *into such* a state as
 “ to be under the *absolute necessity* of constantly
 “ offending against him, and then punish them
 “ everlastingly for it.”*

“ What we do by invincible necessity are not
 “ voluntary works, and cannot, by the rule of
 “ every man’s being rewarded according to his
 “ works, subject us to pain or punishment.”†

It seems highly necessary in this place, to set the subject in its proper point of view, as by this means the Reader will be enabled to get rid of an apparent difficulty, which would otherwise beset him from almost every page of your Book. Indeed the force of a great part of your reasoning and conclusions is derived, in a considerable degree, from your having throughout confounded two things, between which the clearest distinction lies.

There is a sense in which the Inability of man is allowed by us to be direct and absolute. I cannot dwell in the depths of the Sea. I cannot walk in the Air. But this is an inability to which I should be subject, were my will ever so well disposed, and should I try every

* Page 31. † Page 63, see also page 62.

known means, and exert all my endeavours to accomplish my wishes; in such a case certainly no responsibility would attach to me. I could not be blamed for not doing that which I was kept from doing, not by want of will or failure of exertion, but by "invincible necessity;" and I should not be able to see how God could be acquitted of injustice in punishing me for such inability.

But is there no other *indirect* Sense in which Man's Inability may be considered? Of a covetous man we say, he is *incapable* of doing a generous action. St. Peter speaks of unclean persons as "having eyes full of Adultery, and that *cannot cease* from Sin."* "The natural Man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; neither *can he* know them, because they are spiritually discerned." There are numberless passages of Scripture which are to the same effect; "Oh! Generation of Vipers, how *can ye* being evil, speak good things?"† "Led away with divers lusts, ever learning and *never able* to come to the knowledge of the truth:"‡ "Having their consciences *seared* with a hot iron,"** &c. &c. Here is an inability spoken of; but all the reasoning upon this subject in your Book pro-

* 2 Peter, ii. 14. † Matt. xii. 34. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

** 1 Tim. iv 2.

ceeds upon the idea, that all inability must be innocent. If so, wicked men would be innocent; nay, the more wicked and enslaved in sin they are, the less would they be answerable to God; the most abandoned men would be blameless; there would be no difference between the worst of vices, and the most excellent of virtues. You see what horrid consequences must be drawn from these, and many other passages of the word of God itself, except you allow with us the inability of man in an indirect sense; a sense which so far from taking the guilt away, enhances it; a sense from which none of the conclusions, which are so often inferred by you from the Inability of Man, can possibly be deduced. If you are willing to admit this indirect idea of Human Inability, the main pillar of your Publication is fallen; but if you are unwilling to admit it, and will still insist that *all* Inability must be innocent, then I deem it impossible for you to give any satisfactory interpretation to the above-cited and many other Scriptures.

4. It is not my design to notice all that your Publication contains. With what you represent as the peculiar views of Methodists and others, with "Seekings" in the sense in which you use the term, with "inward witnesses,"—"extatic impulses,"—"enthusiastic frames,"

&c. &c. I have nothing to do. If you have not misrepresented the persons, who you say pretend to them and rely upon them, they must answer for themselves. These things form no proper part of true religion. The questions principally to be considered are,—What is the Revelation which Jehovah has given concerning himself?—What is the real character and condition of man?—How is he to obtain the favour of God?—How to be possessed of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.—These important particulars will all be spoken to, in the course of the following letters.

LETTER II.

THERE is but too strong and reasonable ground of suspicion, that a writer acts under a prejudiced and disingenuous mind, when he attempts to make his opponents speak a language which they have never used, and entertain sentiments which they abhor. Yet in your letter upon the *Divinity* of Christ, and the *Trinity*, a strong instance of this reprehensible conduct appears at the very commencement. In page 84, you express your conviction that

there cannot be a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, because the Scriptures decisively declare "that there is but one self-existent Being," one Jehovah; and you bring the first Commandment and some other passages to prove that God is one; and, in page 85, you think it "highly reasonable to suppose the Old and New Testament will not so essentially contradict, each other as for one to reveal and insist upon one God only, and the other to reveal three Gods." And in page 92, you represent us as believing three to be one, and one three. Now do you not know that the Trinitarians are as far from supposing a plurality of Gods as you? They are as properly Unitarians as you, in intention at least. They do not apprehend that by holding the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to be three divine persons, they are necessarily guilty of the heinous sin of having other Gods besides the one Jehovah. You take *that* for granted, therefore, which is the principal thing to be proved; and have argued on a conclusion drawn from their view of the subject which they neither hold, nor admit to follow. In page 86, you ask, could *God* die, could *God* be buried? &c. &c. But, where did you ever read or hear of any Trinitarian who was weak enough to maintain that Christ died as God, or was buried as God? We hold that a person was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered,

and was buried, and that he was united to the Divine Nature. It was incumbent upon you, before you adopted expressions of this kind, either to have shewn us that Christ is not exhibited in the Scriptures as partaker of the divine and human nature, or to have demonstrated that should the Scriptures speak a language which seemed to favour this idea, such an union is utterly impossible in the nature of things.

The first thing to be settled is this—whether, if there should be any thing contained in the Scriptures that favors the idea of an union of the Divine Nature with the human in Jesus Christ, and of a Trinity of Persons in one God—such doctrines are inadmissible of themselves, as being contrary to reason and common sense?

In order to direct our judgment in an investigation of this nature, let us bear in mind, that in matters of pure revelation, and particularly when we are presuming to ascertain what is, and what is not possible with God; a thing may be *above* the reach of our reason, and yet not be *against* reason; a thing may be above our comprehension, and yet by no means incomprehensible in itself. There are many things in Nature, which we are obliged to admit as facts, that are quite above our comprehension, and which, had we been asked an abstract

question concerning the possibility of their existence, we should have been disposed to declare impossible. It is not then *our* duty to prove that such a thing is possible, as that Christ should be God and Man; it imports *you* to demonstrate the contrary; and that has never yet been done. It is trifling, it is presumptuous to plead you cannot understand *how* it can be. Christians are not called upon to understand *how* it is, but to believe *that* it is, if it be clearly revealed. You are unwilling to admit such a Doctrine, because it is so "mysterious," and therefore not likely to be true; and having quoted a passage* in which you consider the Apostle as representing Christ, as no more than Man; and that the Apostle therefore preached him as no more than Man; and that consequently he is no more than Man; you exult over your system as entitled to acceptance, because level to human apprehension: "here is no mystery whatever."†

* Page 87.

† In page 92, you say, "the Trinity is a mystery, its best friends can neither fully understand nor explain, yet strange to tell, the belief of it is made the Gate of Heaven." By Mystery, I apprehend we may understand "something which, in its nature or cause, is not obvious to the human capacity, and, when made known, may still have something in it which is not fully comprehended." We profess to believe simply what God has revealed. Every Religious Creed must admit things which are to man incomprehensible.

Now unfortunately for you, the doctrines of the Gospel are not only declared in general to be mysterious; but St. Paul, so far from endeavouring to get rid of a mystery in this scripture doctrine in particular, allows and maintains it.—“Great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the Flesh,† &c.”†

henfible. There are mysteries which a Socinian allows, in the nature and character of God, which he cannot fully understand. He allows, for instance, that God is eternal: but this is “a mystery he cannot fully understand nor explain.” He allows, that God is a spirit, sees into every future event, formed Creation out of nothing by the word of his power, &c. but these are all mysteries he can neither fully understand nor explain. And I would seriously ask you, whether you would not consider a man, who should be hardy enough to deny the existence of an Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipotent God, in great danger of having shut the Gate of Heaven against himself?

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

† In note, page 89, you say, that Christ's Disciples “in seeing the miracles that Christ did by the Divine Power that dwelt in him, saw the goings forth of God, and thus saw God manifesting himself in Christ:” and then you venture to add, “*perhaps* this is all that is meant by *God being manifest in the flesh*.” You make this a metaphorical expression, and then give it a meaning, which only proves the disparity of the metaphor. Did not Peter and John work miracles by the Divine Power? The same may be said of them then as of Christ. But would you admit that I spoke intelligibly, not to say correctly, if, in endeavouring to make my hearers acquainted with the miraculous Cure which the Lame Man received by the instrumentality of Peter and John in the Temple, I should say, “God was manifested in the flesh in Peter and John?”

No argument then can be raised against the union of the Divine and Human Nature in Christ, drawn from any supposed impossibility in the nature of things. The same may be said concerning the Trinity of Persons in one God. The supposed absurdity which is imputed to us, of calling three one, and one three,* ought not to have been repeated in your publication, till the answers which have so often been made to it, had been shewn to be unsatisfactory. Had we said that three are one and one three, in the same sense, we might justly have been arraigned for a libel on common understanding. But we no more hold any such idea, than that the three sides of a triangle make three figures. If you ask us how we can conceive of three intelligent Agents subsisting in one undivided essence? We answer, that we have no distinct idea upon the subject, nor does this at all affect the question. It is in vain for us to attempt to form adequate ideas of God, either in his attributes or mode of existence. We can know nothing concerning him, but what he is pleased to reveal to us. And, therefore, to Revelation we must have recourse, and let that determine this controverted point. If Revelation clearly affirm the Doctrines of the

Divinity of Christ and a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, any diffidence we may be disposed to feel in receiving them, on account of our inability of fully comprehending them, should vanish as the vapour before the sun.

2dly. Having seen then, that supposing there should be any thing contained in the Scriptures that favors the idea of an union of the Divine and Human Natures in Jesus Christ, and of a Trinity of Persons in one God; neither of these doctrines are of themselves inadmissible, as being contrary to reason and common sense: We will proceed to examine whether they are, or not, clearly revealed in Holy Scripture.

And first concerning the person of Jesus Christ. That Christ is Man we believe with you; but that he is Man *only*, we deny. It is evident, from your publication, that you not only consider Jesus Christ to be inferior to the Father, as "touching his Godhead," according to the Arian Creed; but that you reduce him to the level of a Creature, and make him mere Man. I might, then, in shewing your views to be unscriptural, perfectly succeed, should I fail in proving the Son to be equal with the Father. If satisfactory and undeniable testimony could be produced from the oracles of God, that

Christ is in his nature more than Man, though no higher than the lowest Angel, you hold a false and unscriptural doctrine. But what if it be shewn, (which has been repeatedly and effectually done before by abler pens) that the names and titles of the true God are applied to Christ, and that *literally* and *without figure* or allusion; and that all the incommunicable attributes of God are ascribed to him? What if it be demonstrated from the offices which he sustains, that he who sustains them must be divine: Can a doubt then remain, whether Christ be no more than a mere human creature, or whether he be not God as well as Man?

i. The names and titles of the true God are applied to Christ. I will only cite a few of such as are expressly applied to him, and which need not be proved to belong to him by analogy and inference.

The titles ascribed to him are, * "God," † "Lord and God." ‡ "Mighty God." § "God with us." || "God over all blessed for ever." ** "Lord of Lords and King of Kings." You say, (page 90) "it is not conclu-

* John i. 1. † John xx. 28. ‡ Lk. ix. 6. § Matt. i. 23.
|| Rom. ix. 5. ** Rev. xvii. 14.

live, supposing some texts may call Christ God, for that the word 'God,' has different meanings in Scripture; men in authority and Prophets being called Gods." Yes, and so are Heathen Idols, though they were no Gods. If Christ had been called God in no higher and more proper sense than men invested with civil and spiritual offices who have been so called, there would have been some force in the remark; but are these called "Mighty Gods"—"Gods over all blessed for ever"—"Gods that were in the beginning with God," &c. In Heb. i. 8. quoted from Ps. 45, Christ is expressly called God, by the Father himself, and that when he is endeavouring to give us just ideas of the person of Christ, as compared with Angels and Men. It will, therefore, be in vain to contend here, that Christ is called God only by way of courtesy, as Magistrates and Prophets have sometimes been. So far from there being the shadow of a ground for the supposition, that Christ is, after all, no more than Man, that the Apostle asks, "to which of the Angels said God at any time, thou art my Son, this day have *I begotten* thee?" The Father calls the Angels "ministering spirits," spiritual servants; and commandeth them all to worship the Son." But to the Son he saith, "Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;

a Sceptre of Righteousness is the Sceptre of thy Kingdom." Here we have the testimony of the unerring God himself, (speaking of that Jesus Christ "whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the worlds, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholds all things by the word of his power") declaring him to be his own Son by generation, whilst the highest Angels receive no higher title than Servants; and addressing him as God seated on his Throne, and holding the everlasting Sceptre.

This passage has ever appeared to me to afford evidence for the essential Divinity of Christ, which is utterly incontrovertible; and, was it supported by no other part of the word of God, I could not but receive the person so described, as my Saviour and my God.

2. That Christ is called God, literally and without a figure, cannot be denied, if the incommunicable attributes, acts, offices, and honors of Jehovah are directly ascribed to him, as possessed, executed, and received by him in his own proper character: for they cannot be ascribed to him figuratively, as titles and names may, since no Being can by any license of speech, be said to have them, who has them not; he therefore that has them must be God.

It is evident that Christ existed before he lived upon Earth: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?"* "Before Abraham was, I am!"† His existence is eternal: "He had glory with the Father, before the World was!"‡ "He is before all things!"§ Of him, that which the true God speaks exclusively of himself, (Is. iv, 46.) is said, that he is "Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the ending.¶ He is declared to be Omnipresent, "Even the Son of Man, who is in Heaven."** "I am with you always, even unto the end of the World."†† He knoweth all things! "Lord thou knowest all things."‡‡ "I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts."§§ He is declared to be *Almighty*,||| and to be possessed of Divine Authority.***

That the incommunicable attributes of God, do properly belong to Christ, we have additional testimony from his works, his honors, and his offices.

"All things were made by him, &c."††† "In the beginning he laid the foundation of the

* John vi, 62. † John viii, 58, compared with Exod. iii, 14.
 ‡ John xvii, 5. § Col. i, 17. Isaiah xlviii, 12. || Rev. i, 8.
 ** John iii, 13. †† Matt. xxviii, 20. ‡‡ John xxi, 17. §§ Rev. ii, 23. ||| Heb. i, 3, Philip. iii, 21, John x, 18. *** Matt. xi, 27, Ephes. i. 21, 22, 23. ††† John i, 3. see also Col. i, 16.

Earth, and the Heavens are the work of his hands." * He exercised the power on earth of forgiving sins, † a power which God claims exclusively as his own. ‡ All Heaven and Earth are commanded to honour him. § Christians from the first called upon his name. || His grace and blessing was implored by the Apostles upon the Churches. ** Honor and praise are offered to him as the supreme God even by Angels. †† He is in Scripture described as "the Head of the Church;" †† as having the Government of it upon his shoulders; §§ as "by an unchangeable Priesthood appointed a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for Sins;" ||| "as ever living to make intercession for, and save to the uttermost those that come to God by him; *** and as at the last day, appointed "to judge the world," ††† "to bring to light the hidden things of darkness," ††† to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," §§§ and to decide upon every man with unerring rectitude, not ascertaining the character by actions, but appreciating actions by the motives and the disposition of the mind.

* Heb. i, ii, x. † Matt. ix, 6. ‡ Isaiah xliii, 25. § John v, 23. Philip ii, 9, 11. || 2 Cor. xii, 8. Acts vii, 59. xxii, 16. ** Rom. xvi, 24. Phil. iv, 23. Gal. vi, 18. †† Rev. v. ii, 13. †† Eph. iv, 15. §§ Isaiah ix, 6. ||| Heb. vii, 24, and ii, 17. *** Heb. vii, 25. ††† 2 Cor. v, 10. ††† 1 Cor. iv, 5. §§§ Heb. iv, 10.

Now let any Socinian shew that a person not omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent can sustain these offices. If he cannot, he is mistaken in the true character of Jesus, and it behoves him to reflect seriously upon that decisive day in which he "must appear before the judgment seat of Christ," "when he that denieth Christ before men shall be denied before the Angels of God."

I might convene many other passages from the word of God to support this essential Doctrine; but enough is produced, I am confident, to satisfy every unprejudiced mind, that the Scripture not only favours the doctrine, that Christ is God, but declares and establishes it with the clearest proof that facts can afford and language convey. And if so, Christ is without all question, truly and essentially God. For the alternative now is, either that the Scriptures are inconsistent with themselves, on a point of the very first importance in their doctrines, and therefore must be rejected altogether as a forged imposition exposed by its own internal evidence, (a conclusion at which no Socinian, whilst a Socinian, will own he has yet arrived, however fast he may be tending towards it,*) or else those texts which the Soci-

* Dr. Priestley informs us he does not know when his Creed will be fixed.—See Defence of Unitarians for 1787, Page 111.

nians bring forward to disprove his Divinity, are as far from answering their purpose as those which we adduce in support of his Divinity would fail us, should we endeavour to prove by them that he was not also man.

It now remains for you to shew how Christ can have all the essential attributes of God, and not be God; How he can sustain offices requiring a divine or infinite Agent, if he is not God.—How it can be that he only begun to exist 4000 years after the creation of the earth, and yet that he was present at the creation, and all things were made by him. But admitting that he, who, “as concerning the Flesh, came of the Fathers in Israel, is also God over all blessed for ever;” * every difficulty vanishes; all Scripture harmonizes, even those parts that might otherwise seem discordant.—On this principle, we read with comfort and consistency—“Of that Day knoweth not the Son;” and, “Thou knowest all Things!” “My Father is greater than I;” and, “I and my Father are one!” The *Word* was made *Flesh*.” “*God* was manifest in the *Flesh*.” “The Son shall be subject to the Father;” and, “He remaineth a King for ever.” “He was in the form of God;” and, “in the form of a Servant.” “He is the express Image of the Father;” and,

* Rom, ix, 5.

“He was made in the likeness of Man.”——
 “Feed the Church of *God*, which he has purchased with his *own Blood*, &c.” And, to say no more, by this we can reconcile the 53d chapter of *Isaiah*, with his other exalted descriptions of the *Messiah*.

If the Divinity of Christ be substantiated, I need not dwell much longer on the Doctrine connected with it. The equality of the Son with the Father, stands expressly declared in *Philipp. ii, 6*: “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be *equal* with God.” Upon the memorable directions given by our Lord to his Disciples on his Ascension, I will rest the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity: “Go ye, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Now this is the form of Baptism they were to use, even among the Gentiles. As the Heathen were given to Idolatry, nothing would be more guarded against, than the use of any unnecessary expression which might authorize them to retain their notion of a plurality of Gods. But could any form be contrived that would more effectually teach them, that they were to pay as much honor, and devote themselves as cordially to the Son, as to the Father; and to the Holy

* *Matt. xxviii, 19.*

Ghost, as to either; and that, therefore, they must either be three persons in one God, or three distinct Gods. Nothing can be more absurd than the attempt which has been made by Socinian Writers, to disqualify this text from supporting the Trinitarian Doctrine, which is so clearly proved by the fair and natural interpretation of it; and you prudently declined noticing it. If the Son were no more than a *Servant*, and the Holy Ghost only the *power* of God, the passage is truly ridiculous and unintelligible. If any distinct idea can be conveyed by language, we cannot but understand, that we are as much baptized in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, as we are in the name of the Father. And if it be an act of worship and dedication, as it undeniably is, the Son and Holy Ghost are as truly objects of worship as the Father. In this light the primitive Christians viewed it. And when early Heretics begun to oppose the coessentiality of the Son of God, we find them departing from this form of sound words in their baptism. By being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I declare my belief in each of these persons; my relation to each in their respective characters and offices; and my dedication of myself to them equally and alike. And in doing this I acknowledge the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be three persons in one supreme Deity. I

come to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit.

The result of the whole is this : declarations and exhibitions are given in Scripture of Jesus Christ, some of which make him human, some divine, some God and Man in one Christ. Your system argues, (with as much propriety as I should infer that Man has no Soul, after reading a Treatise upon Anatomy,) Christ is Man, *therefore* he is not God ; yet you cannot shew us, that such a consequence is necessary in the nature of things, and that therefore he *cannot* possibly be God as well as Man. We acknowledge him as he is revealed, the *incarnate God* ; the Son of the Virgin Mary, and the Son of God ; who “ is before all things, was in the beginning with God, and is God.” For this belief we have as satisfactory evidence as we could wish. I assure my readers, I have not produced even a specimen of several kinds of argument and proof still adducible in support of this most important truth. I trust enough is brought forward to shew that we are not worshipping a Creature, instead of our Creator ; that in “ honoring the Son even as we honor the Father,” we ascribe to him only the glory due to his name : And that if we venture the salvation of our Souls on the atonement he has made for Sin, and the prevailing efficacy of his

intercession, we are not so likely to “bring up-
on ourselves swift destruction,” as those “who
deny the Lord that bought them,” and treat
as a worm of earth Him, who in Heaven is
thought “worthy to receive power, and riches,
and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and
glory, and blessing.”

LETTER III.

YOUR sixth Letter, on the Satisfaction of
Christ, begins with informing us, “that there
“are no such phrases in Scripture as, the satis-
“faction of Christ; or, that Christ died to satisfy
“Divine Justice; or, that he paid the Debt
“due to Sin for us; or, that he died in our
“stead; or, that he by his sufferings, reconciled
“an angry God, to his offending Creatures;”
and you repeat with an air of triumph, “there
“are no such words to be found in the New
“Testament.” You tell us further, that “upon
“examining the many texts cited in proof of
“this Doctrine, you find that they neither
“speak the same language, nor the *same senti-*
“*ments.*” You decline entering into a minute
examination of such texts as the following:—

“Christ died for us ;” “was sacrificed for us ;”
 “bore our sins in his own Body on the Tree ;”
 “was made Sin for us ;” “ye are bought with
 a price,” &c. &c. as it would lead you *far be-*
yond your design ; so you dispatch them in the
 lump, with this general sentence of annihila-
 tion : “they are in a great measure figurative,
 “and are borrowed from the ceremonial law
 “of the Jews, or from the Jewish Scriptures.”*
 If, because such phrases as “the Satisfaction of
 Christ,” &c. do not occur in the word of God,
 the idea meant to be conveyed by the writers
 who have used them, (and who have been
 compelled by corrupters of God’s word to use
 them, in order to state and define what they
 conceive to be the true meaning of Scripture
 passages) cannot therefore be scriptural, it would
 follow that we must not express a Scriptural
 idea, but in scriptural language, and all expli-
 cation and comment are improper. That it is
 “far from your design to enter into a minute
 examination” of the texts you have quoted, or
 even into any examination at all, I do not
 wonder. But, excuse me if I endeavour to
 ascertain the proper meaning of these and a
 few more, which you have probably overlooked.

That several of them are figurative, and that
 many of them respect the Jewish Sacrifices and
 Ceremonies, I fully concede ; but that there-

fore they are to be treated as insignificant allusions, I apprehend you will not persuade many to believe. Men will hardly be brought to imagine that Christ should pour the Spirit of Truth upon his Disciples at Pentecost, that they might be able to write metaphorical blunders; for their descriptions of the design and effects of Christ's death, are no better, if we are to understand *no more* by his death than, "that he sealed by his Blood the New Covenant, and established his character, and the truth of the Gospel."* The best method to arrive at just conclusions concerning the main intention and effects of the Death of Christ, will be,

First, To shew what was the proper design and efficacy of the Jewish Sacrifices.

Secondly, What relation there is between them and the death of Christ.

Thirdly, Then we shall be able to judge how we are to interpret the immense body of texts, which appear to us to represent the death of Christ as fulfilling *other* ends, besides sealing the truth of his mission, &c.

You say, that Jewish Sacrifices "were never considered as "standing in the place of sinners, as "victims to appease the justice of God;†" yet

* Page 77. † Ibid 81.

you are obliged to allow, that "the Jew, on properly presenting his offering, had his sin or uncleanness removed.*" And again, "Offerings were brought to remove ritual transgressions.†" You admit, then, that sacrifice was so far necessary for forgiveness, that if it had not been offered, forgiveness could not have been obtained. What then did the offender do in bringing a Lamb to the Priest to be sacrificed for him, and in what light is the sacrifice to be considered? You say, that the advantage of such sacrifice being offered, "consisted solely in the offender's obeying the will of God in these appointments;‡" and therefore, the sacrifice is not to be considered as offered for the express and appropriate purpose of expiating the transgression. But what say the Scriptures? "The Priest shall make an atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned," &c. Lev. v, 10. Here we read that the victim was offered to make atonement for sin; and in Lev. xvii, 11, it is said, that "the blood of the victim, maketh atonement for the soul:" and an Apostle declares, "that without shedding of blood there is no remission." I affirm then, that the Jewish Sacrifice was by Divine appointment, *that* which was to purge from defilement, con-

* Page 81. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.,

tracted by sin committed against the Mosaic dispensation; it was endowed with a propitiatory efficacy, and was to be offered, not only because it was commanded to be offered, but also under the view of its being an atonement for sin. This conclusion cannot be avoided, unless you choose to say, that atonement is there a figurative term; and then how is it figurative, except, as it was typical of the atonement of the death of Christ; an interpretation which you will hardly be disposed to adopt. Of this, however, it was typical. For,

Secondly, my next proposition is, that what the expiatory victim was appointed by God to effect in atoning for ceremonial pollutions, the death of Jesus Christ was intended to effect in atoning for moral defilements. Any man who will study the Epistles to the Hebrews will see, that the Ceremonies, the Sacrifices, the High-Priest and the Temple, were shadows, sketches, delineations of good things to come. Now that which typifies, and shadows forth another institution, is a less and subordinate thing, standing in relation to a greater in which it terminates. —The Type is less than the Antitype, yet similar to and illustrative of it. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away moral guilt, being only invested with a power to atone for ritual transgression, and restore

men to the service of God in the sanctuary. But the Blood of Christ, who "through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God, can purge the *conscience* from the guilt contracted by *dead works*, so as that the sinner can serve the living God." It appears then that sacrifices under the law were expiatory of sin committed against that dispensation, and that they typified the death of Christ, "who was to appear to put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself." * When therefore such expressions as Christ "was sacrificed for us;" "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," &c. are used, it is improper to reduce them to insignificant figurative allusions to Jewish Sacrifices; and, because they seem to have respect to those ceremonies, to refuse their being admitted in proof, that Christ's death is an atonement for sin. For this reference to the type is adopted for the very purpose of establishing the contrary. The Sacrifice, as an atonement, could only be typical of the death of Christ as *it* is an atonement; for it is not a type except it prefigure the *end* as well as the *means*. It would be ridiculous to speak of the death of Christ as a more efficacious sacrifice for sin than the sacrifices under the law, if it was not a sacrifice at all. It would be ridicu-

* Heb. ix. 26.

lous to represent Christ as having undertaken a "better Priesthood than the Levitical, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin," if he be not a High Priest at all, and if he "have not entered once "into the holy place above by his own blood."

Again, let us try a few passages relating to Christ's death by the rule of interpretation, laid down respecting figurative expressions,* and we shall see how insignificant and vapid they are, upon your plan of making Christ's death only a seal of the new covenant, of the truth of his mission, &c. "He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."† I apprehend, that an innocent person is here represented as suffering for the sin of a guilty person, and by that suffering bringing the guilty to God. No, you say, it all means nothing higher, than that Christ died to seal the new covenant, and establish his character. "The blood of Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin."‡ Here we have scripture authority for believing that the death of Christ was the efficacious cause of sin being forgiven and guilt removed. How different this from your idea of the subject; for you hold that it cleanses not, nor can it have any relation to cleansing,

* Page 5.

† 1 Peter iii. 18. ‡ 1 John i. 7.

for "that Christ was given by the Father, as an evidence that he requires no satisfaction."*

"Christ," I read, "was wounded for our† transgressions," &c.† "Ye are bought§ with a

* Page 79 of Narrative.

† Some Writers of a Socinian cast have attempted to get clear of this direct and varied testimony of the Prophet to the vicarious sufferings of Christ, by supposing he was describing some other person, not Christ. But surely, if an inspired writer may be credited, it does refer to Christ; for Philip from Isaiah liii. 7. 8, "began and preached Jesus to the Eunuch."*

† Isaiah liii. 5.

§ You ask, "who was the seller?" It is sufficient to reply to such a quibble, that this is a just translation of the original word. If we talk nonsense, so does the Apostle, who elsewhere says, "Christ hath redeemed us, hath bought us off, † from the curse of the law." And this passage will also repel a gross insinuation, that Christ did not die to save our souls from Hell, ‡ and that we are not delivered from any sufferings that came by the Fall, through the death of Christ. If he redeemed us from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us, he by his sufferings delivered us from sufferings. For he was made a curse when he suffered on the tree. I refer you also to John iii. 14. "As Moses lifted up the the Serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: *that* whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here, his being lifted up evidently means his death on the cross, and the end of that lifting up is, that we should not perish, but have eternal life.

* Acts viii. 35. † εξηγορασεν.

‡ Page 77 of Narrative.

price.”* “Christ was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood.”† “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.”‡ Now if all these expressions mean no more than that “God is disposed to forgive us, if we repent and walk uprightly, and that Christ was manifested as an evidence that he requires no satisfaction;” I should be glad to be told, why it is not written, we are redeemed by the *miracles* of Christ and the Apostles? For certainly, the miracles, which he and his disciples wrought, are the most direct and indisputable proof of his mission; also, why we never read “the blood of the *Apostles* cleanseth us from all sin.” Many an impostor has sealed his pretensions with his blood; and if Christ’s death prevail only as you represent it, then we have redemption through the blood of the *Martyrs*; *Stephen* was stoned for us, and gave himself for our sins in the *same sense* in which Christ did. It also imports you to shew why St. Paul exclaims, “God forbid that I should glory,

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

† Rev. v. 9. ‡ Col. i. 14.

save in the *Cross** of our Lord Jesus Christ."†
 Though it be no where said in Scripture, that
 Christ died to satisfy Divine Justice, yet is it
 not nearly synonymous to say, "that God sent
 forth his Son to be a *propitiation* (or that which
 shall induce, and permit God to be propitious)
 through faith in his blood"; that "God hereby
 declares his *Righteousness*, and can be *just*, whilst
 he is the *Justifier* of him who believeth in
 Jesus?"‡ Is it not evident that the design of the
 propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, was that
 God's *justice* as well as his mercy might be
 displayed in the remission of sins?—But you
 have strong objections to such an idea. "It
 "represents God in an odious point of view,
 "as so inflexibly austere, that he would remit
 "nothing, a character detested among men."§

* You suppose (page 86,) that had Christ been God as well
 as Man, and had the Apostles preached him such, Jews and
 Heathens would have been won, and the offence of the Cross
 have ceased.—The most effectual method the Apostles could
 have taken to avoid giving offence to the Pharisee and
 the Philosopher, would not have been by passing over the
 Death of Christ; for the death of an innocent sufferer excites
 admiration not contempt; but to have avoided treating of
 Christ as "having made peace through the Blood of the Cross."
 It is the preaching of the Cross *thus* which to this day is called
 "foolishness."—See 1 Cor. i, 17, to the end.

† Gal. vi. 14, and 1 Cor. ii, 2. ‡ Rom. iii, 25, 26.

§ Narrative, page 75.

And it involves God in the crime of injustice ;
 “for justice can never punish the innocent for
 “the guilty, and let the guilty go free.” *
 And you observe, (in page 79) that “to per-
 “sons who maintain the notion of the infinite
 “atonement of Christ, he is the first object of
 “love and regard.”

God is never to be considered as a private Individual in his conduct towards Men, but as a moral Governor of the Universe. In this character he has at different times threatened to send destruction on Kings, Kingdoms, the whole human Race. Was he “austere” in doing this? Would he be “austere” and “rigid” should “he remit nothing?” But he did remit nothing ; he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon and Jerusalem, without mercy ; he drowned all the world, as he threatened, except eight persons whom he promised to spare. Was this “austere?” No ; you say, in these awful unmitigated visitations, “he exhibited “proper views of his justice.” (page 76.) At one time, then you see his justice in punishing sinners ; at another, because “God can by no means clear the guilty”† without punishing their offence, he is exhibited as a relentless inflexible Being, and held up for detestation. Are you so acquainted with the character and government

* Narrative page 83. † Exod. xxxiv. 7.

of God, as to be able to affirm, that he is odious in taking vengeance ; and to dictate what is becoming, what unbecoming the just and righteous Jehovah !

But we are charged with involving the conduct of God in the crime of injustice in punishing the innocent Jesus for our offences, and letting the guilty go free.* Before you had ventured such an assertion as this, it became you to be able to shew that there is nothing happening under the government, by the permission, by the direct appointment of God himself, that does not, on this principle, demonstrate him to be an unjust and cruel God.

How do you account for his permitting all the human race to be brought into a state of affliction and death by the sin of one man ? Why were the Amalekites ordered to be destroyed, man and woman, infant and suckling, (1 Sam. xv, 3.) for sins committed by their ancestors near 400 years before ? Why are children born to inherit miseries brought on them by others ? Why were the innocent lamb and bullock appointed by God to be sacrificed to make atonement for the sins of a human transgressor ? If God is to be judged by the standard of our capacities, these permissions and ap-

pointments would prove him unjust, and he would be less good and kind than his depraved creatures; a conclusion to be rejected with abhorrence. We may still believe, then, that "God has made Christ, to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

But suppose no such analogical argument was afforded me from God's ways or word; I might reply, that it can only be contrary to justice in God to punish the innocent in the place of the guilty, should he punish the innocent person *against his will*. For it is no more unjust in God to accept the sufferings of the Son in man's place, supposing the Son to be *willing* to suffer, than it would be unjust in you to accept a sum of money from a kind rich man, who was willing to discharge your insolvent debtor. But Christ came and suffered willingly: "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will."† "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."‡

You attempt to make this doctrine harsh and odious, by representing the maintainers of it as looking at Christ as amiable, but on the Father as a vindictive and forbidding Being. Whatever speculative conclusion you may think yourself

*2 Cor. v, 21. †Psalms xl, 7, 8. ‡John x, 17, 18.

at liberty to draw from such views; those who glory most in the atonement of Christ, and love him most, do not regard the Father as a vindictive, unlovely Being; but as a reconciled, gracious God. They do indeed look upon God as a jealous God, who will by no means clear the unatoned-for guilty; but they see him a God of love as well as of justice. They apprehend that it is to the love of God they owe the coming of Christ. When they view the Son of God dying for sinners, they have far more exalted conceptions of the love and goodness of God, as well as of his justice, than it is possible to entertain on the Socinian plan. They exclaim with the Apostle, "God is Love." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John iv. 9.—They boast with the Apostle Paul, "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," and they reason with him: "if God spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."*

I have now, I trust, most fully shewn that the two fundamental Doctrines of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, are indisputably the

* Rom. viii. 32.

Doctrines of the Word of God. If so, your pamphlet is proved to be an unscriptural attack upon those pillars of hope on which the eternal expectations of millions are entirely rested; and you yourself to be in the number of those who have rejected the Son of God, and trodden under foot that blood which was shed to cleanse you from sin and redeem you to God. Here then I might stop; for if Christ is God, and has died for our sins; whether the Doctrines of Original Depravity, of the Operations of the Divine Spirit, and of Faith in Christ for the Forgiveness of Sins, be unscriptural or no, enough has been said to shew, that you deny *that* which is the principal thing to be believed in order to Salvation. "For he that hath the Son hath Life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life, &c.*" The practical belief of the Depravity of our Nature, and the necessity of the Agency of the Divine Spirit, being, however, of such importance, that without them, *these* are admitted in vain; we will go on to examine how far they are also to be found in sacred Scripture, after first briefly adverting to your fifth Letter on the subject of Election.

* 1 John v. xii.

LETTER IV.

YOUR fifth Letter is upon the subject of Election, in which, by shewing that God providentially called some public characters to their allotted offices, you would persuade your Readers that you have proved, that no person is chosen of God, or called for his own personal good and salvation, by the particular effectual grace of God. How far they ought to depend upon you as a safe guide, whose assertion may be admitted for proof, will be seen in my next Letter, which will treat of the Influences of the Holy Spirit.—Election being a subject upon which serious Christians, “who hold the Head,”* have been far from thinking quite alike, in almost any Age of Christianity; (though much more nearly agreed, in fact, than they have generally imagined) I decline entering largely into it, as you oppose and misrepresent what, in terms at least, many serious Christians do not contend for. Let it suffice then to say, that all sincere humble Christians, proceed so far in strictest harmony, as heartily to confess, that by the *Grace of God alone*, they are what they are in

* Col. ii, 19.

Faith and Holiness. Your remarks, p. 68, 69, only serve to encrease my regret at the departure of pious persons from the Established Church of this Land, in which all extremes of Calvinism and Arminianism are avoided, and in which, therefore, all moderate men may agree to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. I have seen that two great evils have generally followed such a separation: The one is, that they who depart from her *Communion*, too often depart after a time, from her *Doctrines* also; and the other, that should Sects retain the pure Doctrines of Christianity, by their separation they afford a handle to the Enemies of those Doctrines to exult against the Truth, as if divided against itself, and calculated only to engender strife, faction and confusion. It is lamentably true, that the polemic advocates for Arminian and Calvinistic sentiments, have given too much ground for such aspersions; they have each adopted the unmanly expedient of drawing conclusions from their opponents' views which are unfair and forced, and by this means, have furnished the common enemy with weapons. One Instance occurs, (page 71) wherein you revive a stale misrepresentation of the advocates for Election, as holding that, "a great part of the Human Race are, without any will of their own, hurried thro' Life to eternal perdition, *independent of their good or evil conduct.*"

This I dare venture to assert is a language which has never been held by any respectable predestinarian, nor is it fairly deducible from his system.

To your argumentation (page 68,) I further reply, 1st. that I apprehend it is by no means the case, that it is a part either of a Methodist or Calvinistic Creed, to believe that *themselves only* can be subjects of divine grace and heirs of salvation. 2dly. It must be admitted that not all persons and parties have been led by the Spirit of God who have pretended to it, otherwise the Spirit of God is chargeable for sins and extravagancies of the most outrageous kind, which in every age of the Christian Church have been committed by men, who, in the very commission of them, have pretended to divine influences. On the other hand, though I conceive all deliberate separatists from the Religious Establishment of their Country, except when compelled by the paramount command of a *well-informed conscience*, to be guilty of the sin of schism, so severely condemned in the word of God; yet I indulge a confident persuasion that many Methodists and Calvinists not in the bosom of the Church; and, many persons *in* the Church, suspected as they unfortunately are of "blind attachment to their Father's Creed" may be presumed to be real Christians, and led by the Spirit of

God, notwithstanding their disagreement with each other in some things. They may all belong to the real Church of Christ, and yet differ in opinion on some less important points, and may even have much of the spirit of contention and division amongst them. The Scriptures call the effects of the divine Spirit upon the heart and character of a believer, a *change*; but they represent it as a *progressive* change: consequently, while the change is incomplete, there is something yet amiss remaining, and that may be a spirit of division and difference of opinion and practice in some subordinate matters of religion. But this will no more prove that the Spirit is the author of division and confusion, than it will follow that the sun is the author of cold, because all are not completely warm upon whom he shines. St. Paul writes to the Church of Corinth, as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be Saints;" yet he beseeches them, that there be "no divisions and envyings and strifes among them," and states that they were yet comparatively "carnal, and but babes in Christ;" yet "sanctified in Christ Jesus and Saints."

LETTER V.

AS your Third and Fourth Letters speak of the Influences of the Divine Spirit ; the former of its ordinary operations in general, the last of its working faith in particular ; I chuse to incorporate them in my Reply, as I shall reserve out of them the discussion of the powers of man to believe and work righteousness, for my next Letter.

It has been well observed, that the Socinian Creed is little more than a catalogue of negatives. You have been endeavouring to leave us no Saviour ; no Sacrifice for sin ; no Mediator and Intercessor ; no Prophet and King ; and here you would rob us of a Sanctifier and Comforter. According to your scheme, the Apostles were the only persons who have received the aid of the Spirit ;* and that, only to enable them to form just conceptions of the Messiah's

* In page 114, you speak of praying to God to enlarge your Minds, &c. but since you explode the work of the Spirit in ordinary Christians, and place all your reliance on your rational powers ; I can only look upon this as a kind of accommodation to your Readers, not yet sufficiently enlightened to throw off all dependance on Divine Teaching, as the *Illuminati* temporized with their Catechumens on the Continent.

Kingdom, and to preach, and by miracles to recommend Christianity to the World.— All the benefit *we* are to derive from the Spirit of God, is this: That the Scriptures were penned under his agency, and come to us with satisfying evidence of their truth, confirmed by the miracles which were wrought by his power: We may indeed pray, but not for his enlightening, converting, purifying influences, since he is “not intended to produce moral effects,”* except by the indirect way of the operation of that truth upon our minds, which he conveyed to, and by miracles attested in the Apostles of Christ. Man must be left to “the efforts of his own powers,” “the force of motives,” and “the calls of self-love,” and these are pronounced sufficient. To make way for the substitution of this cheerless Creed, you first insinuate that the influences of the Holy Spirit are unnecessary, and cannot be sanctioned by Scripture, because “there we find sinners threatened for not believing;” “Salvation promised to them that believe;” “because by the law is the knowledge of sin;” “by the Gospel we are begotten again;” and “because it is our duty to hear the word of God, and believe and obey.”—If you have met with any person,

who believing in the operations of the Holy Spirit, has asserted that there is no sin in unbelief, or that the law is not applied by the Spirit in convincing of sin, or that there is no necessity for hearing, thinking, watching, praying, and striving against sin, or that the word of God is not the Sword of the Spirit, your reasoning may apply ; but upon all believers in the Influences of the Spirit, of whom I have heard, it is utterly lost.

2dly. Though you boast * that you do not wilfully omit any text, generally quoted in defence of the Doctrine which you wish to oppose, you have certainly avoided the mention of a host of Scriptures which speak of the several operations of the Divine Spirit ; a few indeed you have attempted to interpret to speak against themselves, as shall be shewn ; and “ one dark unparalleled passage ” upon which you say the greatest stress is laid by us, you advise us, with yourself, to leave buried in its obscurity ; properly observing, that no doctrine ought to be grounded on a single dark text.

The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit are not now expected at all ; no man, some

* Note, Page 59.

enthusiastic individuals excepted, now expects to be empowered to work miracles, or to have future events revealed, or to have any express revelations and communications from Heaven, "any secret whisperings, or private interpretations, any dark inward work whatever upon the mind." No Socinian is less disposed than I am to assign to his operations, frames and feelings (which seem for a while to have made up so great a part of your religious experience) when accompanied by none of the solid and unequivocal fruits of the Spirit. But because there has been much false religion in the world, which has made pretence to divine influences, it is not therefore to be concluded that there are no operations of the Spirit whatever to be looked for.

We have Scripture authority to believe, that the Holy Spirit enlightens the understanding. What else could St. Paul implore of God for the Ephesians, when he prays "the Father of Glory, to give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him?"* What else does David desire for himself, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law."† "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day."‡ The meek will he

* Eph. i, 17. † Psalm cxix, 34. ‡ Psalm xxv, 4, 5, 9.

guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way?*" What else can the promise by the Prophet mean, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord?"

The Holy Ghost enables and disposes men to believe with a saving faith. But here it will be necessary to enquire, what is true and saving Faith? Your idea is, "that to credit or believe the Gospel of Christ to be the truth of God, is true and saving Faith."† If this were a just definition of saving Faith, I would readily allow that it would be unnecessary and improper for us to instruct our people to pray for it. "Such a Faith does in all cases depend upon evidence,"‡

* You tell us (page 9,) that unfortunately you read the Scriptures as a sealed book, and insinuate that all serious Orthodox Christians hold this idea. But here again you misrepresent them. If any person has used the expression, it can only be with propriety in this sense, that so long as a sinner continues in his natural state of ignorance, carelessness, and spiritual darkness, the glorious truths of the gospel are hid from his eyes. But no one would say to a humble earnest enquirer after truth, (as you profess to have then thought yourselves) "the Bible is to you a sealed book, and it is in vain to read it:" On the contrary the inspired Teachers say, and every judicious Christian would say to such a man, "read the word of God, and pray to him for the help of his grace; and if you meekly desire to know the truth he will guide you into all truth, and enable you so to understand the Scriptures, as to be made wise unto salvation." The Bible is not, any more than a proclamation, obscure, or feeble in itself; it is only so, through the indisposition of man to enter into the real nature and excellence of its contents, to chuse, to desire, and to embrace them.

† Page 106. ‡ Ibid.

and may be obtained by the proper exertion of the rational powers, just in the same manner as I can satisfy myself that the Magna Charta was signed by King John. If there be something more than this that must enter into the composition of a true and saving faith, and if your objections against our praying for faith, &c. go upon the notion that your view of saving faith is the just one, all your reasonings and conclusions on this head must of course be set aside as irrelevant and misapplied.

Let us then examine what will be the consequence, if we admit your definition of saving Faith : If every man who "credits or believes the Gospel of Christ, to be the truth of God," has "true and saving Faith;" then all persons who believe this, have true and saving faith, let them hold what opinions they may please, respecting the *contents* of the Gospel of Christ. One man may consider Christ as equal with the Father; another as inferior to the Father; another as a mere Man; yet all have true and saving faith. One man may believe that he shall be saved by the righteousness of Christ; another by his own merits; yet both have true and saving faith. In short, You and I, each being allowed really to believe the Gospel of Christ to be the truth of God, may hold views diametrically opposite on the most important

Doctrines of Christianity, and yet both have true and saving Faith. Why truly, if this were the case, the way to Heaven is broad indeed, and all controversy upon this head is utterly superfluous. But in Page 102, inconsistent with yourself, you make Faith, (and you must mean saving faith, for you speak of it as being that act of the mind by which "condemnation and the fear of death are removed from the mind,") to be a belief in the declarations of God for pardon of sin. This view of it, so far as the blessing to be obtained is concerned, comes near to the proper doctrine of believing for remission of sins, or saving faith. It is a view which implies: first, that we believe the Gospel of Christ to be the truth of God, which is all that you make necessary (page 106) to constitute true and saving faith; secondly, that we also believe certain declarations made *in* the Gospel of Christ: and, thirdly, that under these impressions and persuasions, we seek and appropriate to ourselves the promised blessing. But in stating a case of a free pardon conveyed to a malefactor, which you think serves to illustrate the mode in which sinners should be addressed, and to shew how improperly Orthodox Teachers in general do address them, you misrepresent both the matter of fact, and our conduct. Ministers are not authorised by the

word of God to declare "a free pardon," ir-
 respectively to all; they are only instructed to
 make known that God is ready to pardon sin-
 ners, upon certain terms, and under certain dis-
 positions of mind. Nor is it our practice "to
 attempt *no more* than to convince our hearers
 of the necessity of seeking pardon." We de-
 clare to them, that we have authority from
 God to assure them, that if they believe the pro-
 mises made in the Gospel, and by a proper Faith
 embrace them, they shall certainly be saved.
 —You could not have made an assertion less
 founded in truth, than in representing us as
 giving persons, desiring and seeking pardon in
 God's appointed way, and in a proper frame of
 mind, reason to suppose, that there is much
 uncertainty, nay, any uncertainty at all, whether
 they shall obtain remission of sins or no.

But whilst I maintain and shew that to be-
 lieve the Gospel of Christ to be the truth of
 God, is not true and saving Faith; I am as far
 from understanding by it, on the other hand,
 any internal attestation or revelation from
 Heaven, which shall be prior to and productive
 of a belief that my sins are forgiven. It is this
 idea of saving Faith, (a Faith such as you state
 once to have been yours, and which I believe
 some individuals have imprudently and unscrip-

turally held) which has brought the work of the divine Spirit into much contempt. It has filled many with a false hope and peace. Many well-meaning persons also, desirous of attaining it, from ignorance of the way in which pardon and peace are to be sought, and not being able to possess themselves with a persuasion, that their sins were forgiven, have walked in much distress and bitterness of heart; whilst those who have been brought under the influence of a belief, seated only in the passions and imagination, have thereby been prepared, in the end, for hardness of heart, scepticism, and error; for observation teaches us, that enthusiasm generally leads towards infidelity.

The Scriptures declare that we all have sinned; that, being sinners, Christ died for us; and that, if repenting and lamenting our sinfulness, we believe in him, "we shall not perish, but receive remission of sins and have everlasting life." Saving Faith then is a believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, as dying for us, according to the divine promise, for Forgiveness of Sins. It is not a conclusion that my iniquity is pardoned, but an act of reliance upon Christ as having made peace for me through the Blood of the Cross. It is not built upon any witness of the Spirit of God, that my sins are already

forgiven, which is to be the foundation of a belief, that I am justified; but built upon the testimony and promise of the word, under the power of the Holy Spirit disposing and enabling me to believe the promise, trust in Christ, and so receive remission of sins. And if the Holy Spirit, in any way, shew me, or impress on my mind my need of such a Saviour, or give me suitable conceptions of his ability and willingness to save; if he remove my prejudices, incline my heart, and dispel my doubts, he so far enables me to believe, and Faith is his work,

You challenge us to produce a single text that Faith is the gift of God. Lydia was brought by the preaching of Paul to be baptized into the faith of Jesus. But was this effect produced by the unassisted force of truth? No, "the Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul."* If a divine power be not allowed to have been exerted upon Lydia's heart, whereby the word was made effectual; the passage has no meaning, or asserts a falsity.†

* Acts xvi, 14.

†Both the declarations and the practice of orthodox teachers, shew that they have the fullest conviction that hearing is necessary, and that saving faith ordinarily comes by hearing. But Lydia is an instance of the way in which hearing is made effectual,

“No man can come to me except the Father, which sent me, draw him.” Here you take the liberty to pronounce the received interpretation, “that no man can come to Christ unless he be inwardly wrought upon by the “Spirit,” a conclusion perfectly arbitrary;* and you call in the context to help us to a better.

Our Lord observes, “it is written in the Prophets, and they shall all be taught of God; every one, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” One of the Prophets is Jeremiah, who (chap. xxxi, 33, 34) foretells the new covenant of Grace, and by whom the Lord uses these remarkable words: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” (which can only be done by the work of his spirit, see Ezek. xi. 19, 20) “and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord.” &c. What is this but a prophetic promise, that under the covenant of Grace, men would be disposed, by the power of the spirit of God, to receive the law of God into their hearts as a ruling prin-

effectual, which will sufficiently refute your conclusions, so often drawn and urged; that saving faith comes by hearing, *therefore* is not indebted in any degree to an “inward work of the spirit, but to outward testimony alone.” See page 106, 108, 109, &c. of Narrative.

* Page 44.

ciple of holiness, and that by spiritual teaching they would be made acquainted with the divine character, in a way not effected by mere human instruction? And what is so evident, as that our Lord quotes this to shew, that when he declares the necessity of divine grace, in order to our coming to him, he is supported by Prophets, an authority the Jews durst not venture to controvert. But now for your interpretation;—The Prophet has said all under the new Covenant shall be taught of God. What then does the Saviour mean when he says, “every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me?” Why *“every man that has been taught by the Prophets, cometh to me.”* The Prophets are employed to give information that the real subjects of the new Covenant shall all be taught of God; and the whole amount is, they are taught of the Prophets. The Newspaper informs me, by Advertisement, of a man of Science by whom I may be instructed in philosophy; but all that is meant is, I must learn philosophy of the Newspaper. Again, if no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him, that is to say, by the teaching of the Prophets, then you prove that no man can believe on Christ who has not read the Prophets; no man can be led to Christ by the New Testament, but only by the Prophets. Lastly, the word rendered “draw” fig-

nifies far more than the effect of moral suasion: it evidently implies the exercise of such power as is calculated to produce the intended effect. It is the same word, in the original, which is used John xxi, 11. Simon Peter *drew* the net to land. Also, Acts xvi. 19. They *drew* them into the market-place. But should we not think the man an inflated and injudicious writer, who should use such a term to represent the suasive influence of the writings of the Prophets, in prevailing with a reader to believe in Christ. But when applied to that exertion of divine grace by which he "makes his people willing" in the day of his power,"† it is a very proper and expressive figure.

"Without me ye can do nothing." That modern preachers (have *modern* preachers only erred?) should attempt "to shew from this, that men can do nothing profitable in religion without the inward assistance of the Spirit, is to you an astonishing proof how men can impose upon themselves."‡—"Christ could not, you say, mean that without the energy of his Spirit they could not believe, for they were believers already."§ But how does this prove that they were not assisted by the Spirit when they first believed. I have al-

* e nolentibus facit volentes, Aug.

† Psalms cx. 3. ‡ Page 45. § Ibid.

ready shewn your unwarranted mode of interpreting the figure of the vine and the branches. And I must here insist, that in the first verse of this chapter, we cannot but understand *Christ himself* literally, and not his *word* to be represented by the vine, as we literally understand God the Father to be the Husbandman. If therefore, without or severed from Christ, we can do nothing in Religion, we cannot *believe* without him.

“By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”* You say, the words “it is the gift of God” refer to grace only not to faith,† and your reason amounts to this, that because believing is only the channel or means whereby the grace of God is received, *therefore* it cannot be the gift of God. But such an interpretation is not more inconclusive in itself, than contrary to the rules of composition and to good sense. The order in which our translation stands is quite agreeable to the original. None but a confused writer, would place his words so as that the relative should stand so far from its antecedent as “*that*” does from “*grace*,” and so near to another substantive “*faith*.” But to suppose your interpretation to be just would be to prove the Apostle guilty of a needless repetition as well

* Ephes. ii. 8. † Page 56.

as of obscurity. Ye are saved by grace or the free gift of God, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; as if he had said, "Ye are saved by a free gift, and that is not of yourselves, it is a gift:" but *taken* as it is understood by us, "Ye are saved by the free gift of God through faith, and even this faith is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;" it is a declaration worthy of an Apostle, and supported by parallel passages of Scripture. That *τὸ αὐτὸ* "*that*" is in the neuter gender, makes as much against your interpretation as ours, but in fact it makes against neither.*

I forbear remarking on passages quoted, (page 58) for should they not speak for us, they prove nothing for you. "And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."† "For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."‡ These nearly parallel Scriptures appear to you to have no allusion to a work of the Spirit, but only to relate

*Vide Doddridge, Not. in Loc. † 1 Cor. ii, 4, 5.

‡ 1 Thess i 5.

to the power of miracles by which the Apostle introduced himself to them, when he first made the Gospel known to them. But where do you read of miracles having been wrought by Paul at Corinth? The Sacred Scriptures mention none, you have therefore no right to suppose any. Your interpretation is hypothetical, and the very premises which you assume are imaginary; and I appeal to any honest man, whether the following passage, with some others in the same Epistle, does not support our interpretation of the text? Whether it can have any meaning at all, except as it shews that it is God alone who made the word preached effectual, and that can be only by disposing men to believe it, by the operations of his Spirit; "I have planted, Apollos watered, but *God gave the increase.*"* Besides, if an Apostle may be allowed to be his own commentator, he tells you, 1 Thessalonians i, 6. in what sense he meant he came to them "in the Holy Ghost," in the preceding verse: "Ye received the word *with joy of the Holy Ghost.*"

You think, however, that you have demonstrated that it cannot be, that Faith is the gift of God, because we are commanded to believe, and because Faith is represented as the act of man. Neither of these positions has ever been denied

* 1 Cor. iii, 6.

by those who believe faith to be the gift of God. The question is, whether Faith may not be at once the gift of God, and the act of man; and whether we may not need divine aid to enable us to perform our commanded duty? To make a clean Heart is the work of man, yet it is the gift of God: "Make ye a new Heart and a new Spirit;" *—"Create within me a clean Heart O God, "and renew a right Spirit within me."† Here God commands us to do, what the Psalmist prays God to enable him to do. When Jeroboam lifted his withered hand, it was by the power of God, and it was the act of Jeroboam; when the dead Lazarus came forth, it was by the power of God, and it was the act of Lazarus: In one and the principal sense, Jeroboam and Lazarus were *passive*, in another subordinate sense they were the *Agents*, and they serve to illustrate the manner in which sinners believe and become alive unto God. And the conduct of our Lord to the paralytic, Mark ii, 5—13, is calculated to shew, not only that he has power on earth to forgive sin, but also, that the manner in which the diseased man came to the use of his limbs, was illustrative of the manner in which forgiveness of sins was conveyed to him.—The Holy Spirit gives the believer joy

* Ezek. xviii, 31. † Psalms li, 10.

and peace; "now the God of Hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, thro' the power of the Holy Ghost.* He renews the Soul into the moral Image of God: "Create in me a clean Heart, "O God, and renew a right Spirit within "me;"† "He hath saved us by the washing "of Regeneration, and the renewing of the "Holy Ghost, which he shed on us, &c."‡ "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, except a "man be born again, he cannot see the king- "dom of God;"§ "Except a man be born of "Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter "into the Kingdom of God."§ We are con- jured however, not to meddle with any part of this passage.—Why? "It has not a parallel." I have already quoted several.—"It is obscure." Is it so? It is used by the Saviour, by way of explanation, in assisting Nicodemus to com- prehend the nature of a very important change, without which no man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. If it be so ob- scure that no attempt must be made to under- stand it, then Christ could not speak intelligibly upon a subject with which our eternal state is intimately connected. But is it obscure? Christ informed Nicodemus that we must be born again. Nicodemus asked how it was possible that a man

* Rom. xv, 13.

† Psalms li, 10. ‡ Tit. iii, 5, 6. || John iii, 3. § Ibid iii, 5.

should be born again, when he is old? Jesus does not correct him in the idea of a second birth; but uses the Natural birth to illustrate the Spiritual. "Except a man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God;" then adds, "that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit;" and endeavours to silence the doubts of Nicodemus, in a way to which self-sufficient reasoners would do well to attend, by referring him to his own ignorance respecting the production of a natural phænomenon, the effects of which oblige all to admit its existence. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* Besides, our Lord, by asking Nicodemus, art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things? implies that regeneration is taught in the Old Testament, as in Psalm li. 10. Ezek. xviii. 31, &c. This passage then clearly proves that they who are made the subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven become so by a birth similar to natural birth, and that the Spirit is the Agent. Agreeably hereto we are said to be "*quickened*" according

* John iii. 8.

to the mighty power of God," and "*created in Christ Jesus unto good works.*"*

The Holy Spirit is a Comforter: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."† This expression cannot be confined to the short lives of the Apostles.—He is a Spirit of adoption; "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of adoption into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."‡

He dwelleth and worketh in believers: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you."§ "My grace is sufficient for thee."|| "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living

* It is very absurd to suppose any change that may be produced by natural motives could be intended to be described by such images as these, in which God himself is exhibited in the exertion of that omnipotence by which he made the worlds. Your texts, pages 49 and 50, prove nothing against the work of Regeneration, as effected by the Holy Ghost. We never deny the word to be the means, the seed.—1 Cor. iv. 15, 1 Peter i. 3, are both quoted in a mutilated form. The first is, "*In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel,*" I as an instrument in *Christ's* hands, and the word the means. The other is, "who have begotten us again to a *lively hope* by the Resurrection, &c." The Resurrection of Jesus has reference to the lively hope, which it inspires in every regenerated believer, and is not to be considered as the regenerating power. Vide 1 Cor. xv. 1—19.

† John xiv. 16. ‡ Gal. iv. 6.

§ 1 Cor. iii. 16. Rom. viii. 9. || 2 Cor. xii. 9.

water. But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.”* “If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”†

He enableth to obey God: “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit.”‡

He enableth to pray: “Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”§

He is promised of the Father: “I will put my Spirit within you.” || “I will pour out upon the house of David the Spirit of Prayer, and supplication.”** “Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, &c.”†† This promise you would limit in its application, as if made to none but Saints or Believers. You think it plainly expressed, that they are the Disciples who are here taught to pray; for when he was seated upon the Mountain, his Disciples came to him and he taught *them*; and therefore it could not be addressed to

* John vii. 38, 39. † Rom. viii. 13. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 22.
§ Rom. viii. 26. || Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 37, 14. ** Zeck. xii. 10.
†† Matt. vii, 7, 8.

“unbelieving seekers.” If we confine our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, to his Disciples, this question arises: Whom are we to understand by “Disciples?”—The *Apostles* alone? If so, the duties enforced, thro’ the whole Sermon, are not binding on ordinary Christians. But will even Socinians say so, who profess so warmly to admire it as a perfect epitome of Christian Morality? Are we obliged then, at the farthest, to enlarge the boundary no wider than to include real justified believers? By no means: on the contrary, we may extend the term to all those who attached themselves to him, to hear him, in the same wide sense that we consider the Disciples of the Pharisees, and of John; and then the general promises, as well as the precepts, apply to *professing Christians* at large.—Many of Christ’s Disciples were not Believers, in the strict and proper sense of the term; as we find, John vi, 66: “Many of his Disciples went back and walked no more with him.” We read* of a “*Multitude*” of Disciples, for so, *Company* may properly be rendered; and many other passages of Sacred Scripture prove, that the word “*Disciple*” is used with as much latitude, as we now use the word Christian. But let it be considered that the *multitudes*

* Luke vi, 17.

who attended him, had followed him from the whole circumjacent Country, and St. Matthew* informs us he taught *them*, the people, not the Disciples only. The *internal* evidence of the Sermon on the Mount is for this most extended interpretation. If he were addressing none but Apostles and Believers now become Saints, was it necessary to guard them against habitual hypocrisy, in almsgiving, prayer, and fasting? And above all, was it proper to warn them to "*enter in at the Strait Gate, which leadeth to Life?*" They had entered that already. The Sermon then was not a private charge to the Apostles or chosen Disciples, but intended for all the Disciples, the Multitude, and therefore for all who profess to be followers of Jesus in every age. The promise then is of general application, and to us the Lord says, "Ask, and ye shall have, &c." "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

Many more Texts might be produced in support of this doctrine; but is not enough said? If but *one text* out of all the number I have quoted, could be proved to be conclusive, it were sufficient to shew that you

* Matt. vii, 29.

hold a fundamental error. But if ideas can be expressed by words; if repeated express affirmations, and undeniable inferences; if the very genius and tenor of Scripture Truth are not to be set at nought: Then, if we be Christians indeed, not only the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, but also the Communion of the Holy Ghost *is ours.*

LETTER VI.

IN the beginning of your third Letter, you consider writers who believe in the original depravity of our nature by the Fall, and in the necessity of a work of the Spirit to recover us to the Divine Image, “as acting an unfair part “in bringing the two Doctrines, taken for granted, in proof of each other,” (like the Astronomers who have inferred the magnitude of some heavenly bodies from their distance, and then their distance from their magnitude :) I hope you will not object, if, after having proved that a remedy is promised and provided

In the Scriptures, I proceed to examine whether we be not indeed "sick and in need of a Physician." If a remedy be revealed, the presumption is that a God of Wisdom has not provided it in vain.

Your Creed in this part of your system, so far as I am able to collect it, is the following:—The effects of the Fall were *chiefly* corporeal, though not entirely so; for you speak of the weakness of Man, by which I conclude we are to understand, at least, his proneness to be led into sin, as you elsewhere call him "frail and erring Man:" But a total depravity of heart you cannot allow. "Man then," according to your system, "is, in a degree, a sufferer in a spiritual as well as temporal sense. He is "frail, and erring, and weak, but not radically corrupt; liable to fall into sin when his "passions are disordered," when his "propensities betray" or "bad examples seduce," but "far from inclining after evil or indisposed to "good."—We believe and admit that man has not lost by the Fall, the use of his rational faculties, however they may be *impaired* and *perverted*. We believe that he can think and judge, weigh evidence, and feel the force of motives. We do not consider him destitute of a natural power to do or to avoid an action;

we admit that he can read, hear, meditate, pray, examine himself, go to a place of worship, and avoid the way and practice of sinners. We do not deny that he may, by his own unassisted reason, by the help of the Scriptures and other writings, arrive at just ideas respecting the being and attributes of Jehovah, the doctrines of grace, and the line of duty which a believer ought to pursue. But we believe, that through the disorder of his darkened understanding, and corrupted taste, he does not of himself form spiritual and suitable conceptions, concerning the excellency of God's moral character. We believe, that whereas his duty is to love the Lord his God, with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength, he naturally does not love God, having a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. We believe that he is by nature radically corrupt in his will, affections, appetites, and tempers, and inclined to evil, not to good; so as not to do that which is intrinsically good "without the grace of God preventing him that he may have a good will, and working with him when he hath that good will." * We further believe that this natural depravity instantly operates in leading us to the commission of actual sin, whereby we contract personal guilt, and that the

* Art. X. of Church of England.

wages of sin, of every sin, is eternal death, eternal misery, if not remitted. This view of fallen Man we are satisfied is confirmed by the Holy Scripture; by the universal Practice of Men; and by the consent of the generality of Mankind.

1. It is built upon and confirmed by the direct and indirect testimony of Scripture. The sentence which God denounced under the Covenant of works was: "The day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Adam sinned. "By this one man, sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that, or, *in whom* all have sinned.† Death then is undeniably the punishment, the wages of sin. A God of justice will not punish improper objects, nor inflict unsuitable punishment; therefore all who are visited with death are justly punished for sin. But infants die: Infants then, who die as soon as they are born, and "have never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," are to be considered as justly suffering for sin, and consequently as under the guilt of sin, and if so, original guilt is proved. This necessary conclusion is justified by what is said by an Apostle—Ye were *by nature children of wrath* even as others. No ob-

† Rom. v. 12.

jection can be made to this conclusion as inconsistent with our ideas of the justice of God, in punishing the innocent with the guilty, which does not equally apply to the *temporal* and *corporeal* effects, which you admit to have fallen on the race of Adam through his transgression. By the obedience of Christ, the federal head of the Covenant of Grace, many are made righteous; so we have reason to suppose it would have been if Adam, our first head under the Old Covenant, had not sinned; but as he sinned, many, even all his race, were in like manner made sinners. "Through the offence of one many are dead."—That man is corrupt and radically depraved, many texts demonstrate. Besides those which you quote from Genesis vi. the 5th and 12th verses, and which certainly testify the universal prevalency of internal depravity and external wickedness in the world, how are we to account for your omission of one, which, I apprehend, speaks directly to the *innate* corruption of the human heart in general? "The imagination of man's heart is evil *from his youth*." * "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." † ‡ "The wicked are estranged from the womb, as soon as they are born, they go astray and speak

* Gen. viii. 21. † Psalm li. 5. ‡ Psalm lviii. 3.

lies.”* What is man that he should be clean, or he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous.”† “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way.”‡ “God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”§ Here then we have the express testimony of God by the concurring voice of Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, &c. to the radical corruption and universal depravity of the human race, and that in as high a degree as we contend for: Yet you would persuade your readers that the Old Testament contains no such Doctrine.—“But neither Jesus Christ nor his Apostles acquaint the people with their radical corruption, or that they had no power to do the will of God.”|| Had no remarkable testimony of our Lord to the depravity of our nature been given us, it would by no means have followed that he had never

* In addition to these texts, David asserts, Psalm xiv, 1—3. and repeats in liii, 1—3. the general corruption of man in heart and practice: yet, though in the mouth of two or three witnesses truth is allowed to be established, we are warned to withhold our belief from these single texts. One of them also, we are told, is figurative, for when a child is born it cannot speak at all. Well, sir, if you will allow us to believe the Psalmist meant, as soon as the child could speak, we will not quarrel with you, only you must have observed that a child will attempt to deceive *before* it can speak.

† Job. xv. 14. ‡ Isaiah liii. 6. § Eccles. vii. 29.

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spoken to that effect. We have many valuable articles given us by St. John, on which the three preceding Evangelists were silent; yet he informs us that much more is left unrecorded. But can any declaration be more decisive than the following: "*Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.*"* The heart is the source of all these. Many of them cannot be learned by example, and our Lord emphatically describes them all as coming from within, the natural produce of that degenerate soil. And when he declares that "no man can come to him except the Father draw him," he asserts the radical inability of man to believe and turn to God, in the strongest manner possible.

Lastly, do the Apostles then, "in all their preaching never tell the people they had no power to do the will of God, but uniformly address them as capable of believing and obeying God?"† Is it possible that the man who can venture such an assertion as this, has ever read the following passage: "It is God who worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* of his good plea-

* Mark vii, 21, 22.

† See Page 32, of Narrative.

ture.”* Are the Philippians not here reminded in the clearest and most unequivocal terms, that the will and the power to obey God are his work in their Souls? Is it not an awful instance of presumption thus to deny that to be a Scripture Doctrine, which is so clearly stated, so incontrovertibly maintained there? Could the Apostle more positively affirm the complete depravity of human nature than when he says, “there is none righteous, no, not one?”† “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.”‡ You ask, (page 46) is the natural man *compelled* to do the lusts of the Flesh? I answer, that the natural man, continuing such, cannot receive, &c. For the rest, I refer you to Phil. ii, 12. just quoted. “I know that in me, that is, in my Flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.”§ “The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be;”|| wherefore, “except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”**

Again, the Scriptures inform us that all men are condemned by the Law of God, which is holy, just, and good, and are liable to future

* Philipp. ii, 13. † Rom. iii, 10. ‡ 1 Cor. ii, 14.

§ Rom. vii, 18. || Ibid viii, 7. ** John iii, 3.

eternal punishment. "Sin is the transgression
 "of the Law."* "We have proved both
 "Jews and Gentiles that they are all under
 "Sin."† "There is none righteous no not
 "one;"‡ "every mouth must be stopped, and
 "all the world become guilty before God."§
 "Curled is every one that continueth not in
 "all things which are written in the Book of
 "the Law to do them."|| "The wicked shall
 "be turned into hell and all the people that
 "forget God;"** "these shall go away into
 "everlasting punishment,†† where their worm
 "dieth not and the fire is not quenched."‡‡—
 Should we even admit your objection that this
 sentence was only denounced against actual
 transgression, original sin and guilt not being
 declared, the result would be nearly the same,
 if *all* are, as the Apostle says, guilty before God.
 For this universal liability to punishment for
 sin proves, I think, the universal liability
 of man to commit sin, in other words a uni-
 versal depravity of Nature. Of the justness of
 such a conclusion you are aware, and are there-
 fore anxious to disprove the universal sinfulness
 of Man. In order to this you venture to
 oppose what you consider a Scripture instance

* 1 John iii, 4. † Rom. iii, 9. ‡ Ibid iii, 10.
 § Rom. iii, 19. || Gal. iii, 10. ** Psalm ix, 17.
 †† Matt. xxv. 46. ‡‡ Mark ix, 44.

against a mass of Scripture testimony : “ Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation and walked with God.”* Had it ever been asserted by us that the Grace of God cannot, does not make persons, corrupt by nature, to become just, and to walk before God with a perfect heart ; or had the Scriptures declared that Noah was naturally pure, and had never committed actual sin, you might in either of these cases have claimed one solitary passage as favouring your opinion. But the former is never asserted by us ; we believe the contrary ; and as if to guard against understanding too much by his high character, this same Noah who is to be your specimen of original purity and perfection in life, is recorded as an *imperfect* creature, by being guilty of the sin of drunkenness. Job is represented as a perfect man, yet he asserts the depravity of our nature, and the vileness and sinfulness of his own character. Now should you be told of a community of persons, who have upon them the external marks of leprosy, except one or two, and that even these had once and again exhibited proofs of disease, would you hesitate to pronounce that they were under a general and hereditary taint in their very system, and natural constitution ? Such is the race of Man.

* Page 27 of Narrative.

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* Page 27 of Narrative.

2. The Depravity and Inability of Man are clearly shewn then to be Scripture truths; and were any support necessary to the declarations of the word of God, it is afforded, in too copious a measure, by the general practice of men. The duty of men is expressly stated in Scripture to be, as has been observed, to love the Lord their God with all their heart, &c. and to live to his glory by obeying him, submitting to him, and trusting in him, and by loving their fellow-creatures, and doing to others as they would have others do to them. Now had not man been a depraved creature; had he been only as well disposed to goodness as to sin, it must be allowed, that, with the light of God's word, and under the influence of awful threatenings against sin, and rich promises to the obedient, there must always have been more of real goodness than vice in the world. Example must have been in favour of true religion and holiness. But where has been the nation in which sin, ignorance of God, and rebellion against him have not been predominant. In vain will you seek for that nation amongst the civilized heathens, the simple savages, or the highly-favoured people of God themselves. Have the Indian or Hottentot tribes any correct ideas of the moral attributes of the one true God, or know they any thing of the Christian virtues? Did the refined inhabitants of Athens and Rome advance, in pro-

portion to their improvements in Arts and Literature; in the knowledge and love of God; in chastity, temperance, and integrity? Are the enlightened people of France, since they were emancipated from the shackles of superstition, by the Genius of Liberty and Philosophy, become exemplary for religious reverence, and for the mild, peaceful, and pure morality of the Gospel? Were the Jewish Nation, amidst all their privileges, a believing, obedient people; or were they not a living proof from generation to generation, that Man is a depraved and sinful creature? Were they not a stubborn and rebellious people, “a people whose heart was not aright and whose spirit never cleaved stedfastly unto God?” Were not all the accumulated displays of God’s love and displeasure; in punishment, by famines, wars, and captivities; in deliverance, by plenty, peace, and restoration; in his promises and in his threats; together with the alarming instances of total destruction, which they saw inflicted on other incorrigible nations, and of several of which they were themselves the instruments:—were not all these insufficient to keep them from filling up the measure of their iniquities, and from being, at this day, a convincing proof of the natural blindness and depravity of Man, when forsaken of God, and

left to himself? If there be any who do truly
 “love the Lord their God with all their heart,”
 “rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ,” hate sin,
 delight in the Law of God, live to his honour,
 and “abound in the fruits of faith which are
 by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God;”
 they are free to confess, with inspired writers,
 that this is not their native disposition; that they
 once were “foolish, disobedient,” &c.*: that
 “by the Grace of God they are what they
 are;”† that it is not they which live, but Christ
 liveth in them;‡ and that still “when they
 would do good, evil is present with them.”§
 Of such persons it may be said, they are of God,
 but the *whole world* besides lieth in wickedness.||

3. This view of man is still further corroborated by the express consent of the generality of mankind, of almost every age and condition. That inspired writers concurred in this belief has been already shewn. And it is remarkable that those Heathen Authors, who have declaimed so pompously on the moral excellencies of man, and the loveliness of virtue, have, as it were in despite of their own intentions, also confessed the radical corruption of our nature, though unacquainted with its ori-

* Titus iii, 3,—6. † 1 Cor. xv. 10. ‡ Gal. ii, 20.

§ Rom. vii, 21. || 1 John v, 19.

gin. They have depicted Man more agreeably to Scripture, and to fact than you have done ; not as "frail" but as *wicked* ; not as born *liable* to be *seduced* to sin, but as *born in sin*.

A view established upon the authority of Scripture, and the general practice and consent of mankind, must be allowed to be the just and proper view of Man. But as your arguments against it, and the collateral Doctrine of the necessity of the influences of the Divine Spirit, are chiefly drawn from some supposed absurdities and improbabilities in the Doctrines themselves, it will be necessary for me to meet some of your principal objections.

Objection i. You contend "that it is contrary to your ideas of the perfection of God, "that he should place, or suffer his creatures "by any means to be brought into such a state "as to be under an absolute necessity of offending against him and then be everlastingly "punished for it."* To this I reply in the first place, that had God provided no means for our recovery, which should be effectual for all that embrace them, your objection would

have been entitled to some consideration; though even then you would have been called upon to shew whether it be not equally inconsistent with the perfections of God, that the Apostate Angels should have been so placed by him, as to be brought into such a state (a state which God must have foreseen) as that they are fallen into a condition in which they will never cease to sin, and have no offer of mercy made them, but "are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgement of the great day." It will not avail to plead a distinction between their case and ours; their sin being their own sole personal act, whereas though we all sin wilfully, we are brought into a proneness to sin by the transgression of another: For should the *justice* of God be acquitted, his *goodness* will still be involved.

But let it further be considered, that the actual condition and prospects of men would be made little or no better on your principles. You allow the world is, and ever has been depraved and wicked; but if the impenitent "wicked are to be turned into Hell, and all the people that forget God," then, I ask, how it is consistent with your idea of the perfections of God, that he should so place, or suffer us to be placed, that thro' a

“frailty and erring weakness,” either coeval with the formation of the first man, or permitted to possess our nature by, and at the transgression of another, (as God must have foreseen would happen) so great a part of mankind should be led away to wickedness and the eternal ruin of their Souls. God is surely as chargeable with that frailty and infirmity, and erring weakness, which you allow to be in man, and to be the cause of his prevailing sin and guilt, as he is with suffering us (as *we* conclude from Scripture) to be born under a positive depravity of nature; and if God has left man no higher aid than the force of truth, and the efforts of his own powers, he is evidently in a worse state than if he had the Spirit of God promised him, in the use of means (which he is under no natural inability of using) to enable him “to will and to do.” What are the moral powers of a being, “frail, weak, erring,” and surrounded with temptations to neglect the truth, and to acquire sinful habits!

2dly, You think it an insuperable inconsistency, “that God should require of us a “belief which we of ourselves cannot form, an “obedience we cannot yield him.”* I have al-

* See Page 62, 28, 71, &c. of Narrative.

ready produced instances to shew, that God has not commanded us to do more than what we have Scripture authority for imploring him to enable us to perform. If God has established means of Grace and Salvation, in which he has engaged to help and bless all those who cordially wait upon him; and if we have all a natural power at least to use those means, so as that if we do not use them aright, it is owing to our wilful rebellion and obstinacy; then God has as full a right to require us to believe and obey, as if we possessed perfect underived power to believe and obey. And tho' all who are effectually brought into a state of Salvation, are indebted to the free and powerful operation of Grace upon their hearts; yet, the impenitent and unbelieving, will be justly condemned for their deliberate sins, committed in violation of the voice of their natural consciences and the known will of God. The ungodly man will be justly condemned for neglecting the House of God, reading of the Scriptures, and prayer; the drunkard, for his intemperance; the blasphemer, for his profaneness; the self-sufficient, for his pride and self-conceit; the unbeliever, who neglected to use the proper known means to have his unbelief removed, for unbelief, &c. &c. He sins, because he wills to sin; he commits many sins which he might have avoided

without the special Grace of God, and is therefore inexcusable : for wherever there is choice, there is responsibility. Hence it was, that tho' the Lord Jesus told the Jews, that they could not come to him, except his Father drew them ; yet he held them entirely guilty of, and responsible for the sins he charged them with—prejudice, formality, hypocrisy, spiritual pride, worldly-mindedness, persecuting malice, unbelief, &c.

In the Covenant of Grace, the means are ordained as well as the end. Man's moral depravity is never admitted as a plea for sin and unbelief ; nor on the other hand is the freedom and sovereignty of divine Grace ever represented as a reason why any man should not use the means of grace with diligent care. On the contrary (a seeming paradox, which I leave to you to unfold,) when the Apostle commands us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, he adds, as a reason and encouraging motive, (not as your system would require, "for you are able to do this of yourselves," but,) "*for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*"—There is confessedly a difficulty in this mysterious subject ; but no greater than in some parallel cases in the œconomy of Providence. Who can explain how it is that God shall, as in the history

of Joseph, have an eventful and complex plan to execute, which depended on the wills and conduct of so many persons; that all those persons shall act from their own free choice, and do their own pleasure, and yet accomplish his purpose. Who can explain the seeming contradiction contained in the following words of Peter, concerning the decrees of God on the one hand, and the wicked purposes of the Jews on the other, both concurring in bringing about the same event: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." * These certain, but to us inexplicable facts, with many others, should teach us diffidence, and preserve us from the rash presumption of declaring every thing which we cannot fully comprehend, to be absurd and impossible. St. Paul introduces an Objector on this very subject, asking, why God finds fault with us for sinning, if none can be saved but by the free grace of God calling them? His answer is only this: "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against, or disputest with God? †

But 3dly. "This doctrine would, you think, entirely destroy the idea of merit. ‡ For if

* Acts ii. 23. † Rom. ix. 20. ‡ Page 32.

“ man be indebted to the supernatural influ-
 “ ence of Grace, for making him good, he has
 “ no merit, properly speaking, since the same
 “ influence might have made others good
 “ who are not so; the difference not being in
 “ the persons but in the work of the Spirit;
 “ ideas quite foreign to every thing that is
 “ recorded concerning them.” If this be a just
 and scriptural statement, then we shall read that a
 man is saved by his own goodness; that by his
 own powers and efforts, he is what he is: that
 the praise and credit of his salvation will be due
 to the man who shall turn to God and obey his
 will; and that he may therefore boast, now and
 through eternity, that though God forgive him
 many things upon his sincere and pure obedi-
 ence, yet this sincere and pure obedience being
 performed by him, without any spiritual influ-
 ence or help from heaven, he is indebted ulti-
 mately to himself and to his own merit for
 eternal life. But whether this is not as far
 from being the language of scripture, as the
 east is from the west, let any man judge. “Who
 hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,
not according to our works, but according to his
 own purpose and grace, which was given us in
 Christ Jesus before the world began.” “By
 the Grace of God I am what I am.” “All

have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified *freely* by his Grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." And not to multiply texts, the glorified Spirits in celebrating their salvation in heaven, do not exclaim "worthy am I," but "worthy is *the Lamb*, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

4thly. "It cannot be true that human nature is radically corrupt, for even in its worst state, it has something in it which approves of virtue, justice, and mercy; and there is not a profligate or libertine to be found who would not rather place his aged parent, or his helpless infant, in a virtuous house than in a brothel."* To this objection I would offer the following considerations: Abstract notions that there is such a thing as right and wrong are not utterly lost by the Fall, since man can still reason and judge. Yet

on the other hand, so far is human nature from being possessed of inherent powers which regularly lead to the discovery, approbation and practice of virtue, justice and mercy, that the most contrary opinions have been formed in deciding upon the nature and expediency of certain actions, some pronouncing those to be vices which others admire for virtues.—Your libertine may, like modern writers on natural religion, have received light from the word of God, which he does not acknowledge.—Natural affection, which is in some measure instinctive and involuntary, may prompt him to wish well to his relatives.—A regard for reputation, and a desire to balance vices by virtues, often induce wicked characters to attempt creditable actions.—No one is a proficient in every species of iniquity. That men should deliberately serve their vicious appetites, and persist in habits of iniquity, which their conscience and judgment so decidedly condemn, is to me evidence that man is something worse than frail and infirm.

5thly. But a still more stubborn objection yet remains to be combated. The doctrine of the inability of man, has been tried by “a plain illiterate person,” in the crucible of Philosophy, or, if not, *some Philosopher* has made the experiment for him; and the result is this conclusion: that

“if men have made discoveries in abstruse
 “sciences, and can explain great difficulties in na-
 “ture, they surely cannot be under such a natural
 “debility as not to be able to understand and
 “believe a plain, simple, well-attested fact;”
 especially when it is considered “that faith is
 “the result or effect of evidence alone”†; our
 view therefore of the subject, is adjudged to be
philosophically false.

1. It is necessary here to remind you and my
 reader, that we mean by Faith, something
 essentially different from understanding and
 believing the plain, simple fact, that the Gospel
 of Christ is the truth of God, though including
 that. The Devils believe and tremble. With us,
 the chief enquiry is, “*what* do you believe as the
essential truths contained in the word of God,”
 and “*how* do you believe them?”

2. There is this singular peculiarity in true
 Christianity, that, whereas all other subjects are
 dark and unknown at first, and have been eluci-
 dated so far as they are known, by the accumu-
 lating contributions of successive ages; real re-
 ligion came forth from its Author's hands, like
 our first parent, perfect and full-grown at first,
 as amply explained in essential things, and as

intelligible on the first day of its existence, as at the present period. In Christianity therefore, as a system of revealed doctrines and duties, no improvements are to be expected to be made. In it, we need not a Newton to discover, or an Euclid to demonstrate. In order to become wise unto salvation, we want little more than a disposition to hear, read, mark, learn, inwardly digest, and meekly receive what is so plainly made known; and that disposition all of us may have who will humbly use the proper means to obtain it, the peasant as well as the philosopher, the simple as well as the sage. If a disposition and power to believe and obey the Gospel were the proper and necessary effect of evidence alone, then it will follow, that he who is best qualified to weigh evidence would be the most likely person to become a sincere Christian. The philosopher, and the man of reading and research would come most generally and unreservedly under the best influences of revealed truth; whilst the poor unlearned mechanic, from want of evidence and of ability to appreciate the little he can collect, would remain, in a great measure, in a state of ignorance and irreligion. But does this hypothesis receive the confirmation of fact and of Scripture? Or, do we not know, that a very considerable majority of wise and learned men, in every age of

Christianity, have shewn great indifference, and even scepticism in matters of religion? Have not many of the warmest and ablest advocates for Christianity been far excelled, in true Christian excellence and practical Godliness, by men of much meaner talents and less reading? Are not the bulk of truly religious and exemplary Characters, persons of ordinary understandings, and possessed of little information in Theology, except so far as they have simply sought instruction from the Divine Oracles themselves, an instruction not calculated so much to shew them that "the Gospel of Christ is the truth of God," as to make them wise in a practical acquaintance with the contents of the Gospel? Are we not told, that in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, we must become as little Children, humble, simple, teachable? Did our Lord not "thank his Father, that he had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto Babes?" Did he not fix upon this as the peculiar Glory of his Character and mission, that "to the *Poor* the Gospel is preached?" And does not an Apostle say, that "not many wise men after the flesh," or in human learning "are called?" "Where then is the Scribe, where the Disputer of this World?" All Scripture, all experience shews, that true Religion is not explored by the dim lamp of reason and

philosophy, but discerned under the bright beams of the Fountain of true Light, as it is manifested and made known in the Gospel. It is not a discovery, but a cordial acceptance of plainly revealed Truth. It is found not in the vaunting reasoner, who is confident in his powers, and obliges all the Counsels and Scriptures of God to pass under the yoke of his narrow comprehension, but in a heart sensible of its natural weakness and blindness, and humbly looking up to God in prayer, to be guided in judgment, and led in the way everlasting.

LETTER VII.

I HAVE now gone through your representation of the leading Doctrines of the Gospel, and the attacks you have made upon them. Whether the generally received view of them, or that which you have imbibed is more agreeable to Scripture, to Reason, and to the rules of legitimate Interpretation, the public, and especially the religious public are *once more* seriously called upon to decide. For you need, not to

be informed, that, though you profess to have now arrived "at the immoveable basis of Reason and Truth, unassisted by any pilot,"* you are not the first Navigators who have steered the same course and reached the same moorings; they only differing from you in this, that they are not so confident, they shall weigh anchor no more. And give me leave to express my suspicion, that, since you inform us that you have seen books, far abler books than your's "which are full and direct upon the subject,"† though you took no pilot on board in your expedition for discoveries, you may, even perhaps without perceiving it, have formed some notion, before you put to sea, what direction you would take, and in what region you meant to land. Under these circumstances your unprejudiced readers and mine will not be so much disposed, as you may wish them, to receive your present views as the original system of "a few plain, unlearned men," derived from "the simple study of the Scriptures." Nor will your disposition to depart so far from the Doctrines you now oppose, be generally considered to have resulted from a dislike of them, arising out of a conviction of their being false, *prior* to your having read the Socinian

Creed, (which you studied in those able anonymous books you recommend) but to have been occasioned by reading those books.

All that seems necessary to be added, under the last head proposed, will be a few remarks :
 1. Upon the reasons you assign for your separation from the Established Church. 2. Upon the qualifications necessary for a proper investigation of Religious Truth. 3. Upon your present system, when contrasted with that which you have abandoned.

1. Your separation is not ascribed, by you, to any dislike which you then entertained, either to the Doctrines of the Church of England, or to her Rites and modes of Worship : On the contrary, it was not till after you had veered about, first to *Methodism*, then to *Calvinism*, then to *Johnstonianism*, then to *Anabaptism*, that you collected light and courage enough to deny the Divine Nature of the Son of God, and the corruption of your own, and, to say, "In the Lord, I will no longer have either righteousness or strength."* What then is assigned as a cause for separation ? Why, two reasons are set up, such as one would think must have

* Isaiah xlv. 24.

appeared too flimsy and transparent even to the man who was already determined to separate, and therefore was anxious to avail himself of the most plausible pretext he could devise.

The first reason is, that some persons have been introduced into the Sacred Office, in the Establishment, from interested motives, and that others of them are deficient in learning, talents and moral conduct.*—Now, allowing this censure to be, to a certain degree, well-founded, what had *you* to do with it? Did the sin, or defects of these men lie at your door? Is the purity of the Service of the Church impaired; is the spirituality of her Liturgy destroyed, by the unworthiness of some of her Clergy to minister in holy things? Can a religious establishment be devised, in which the immorality or incompetency of a minister could do *less* injury to the souls of the people committed to his care? Was there not in the Church of Christ, even in the Apostles' days, a Demas who loved this present world, a Diotrophes who loved to have the pre-eminence? Was there ever a body of Christians heard of since, however confined in numbers, and rigid

* Pages 9 and 10.

in discipline, in which the ministers were *all* found, upon trial, to be uniformly unexceptionable for character and ministerial usefulness; or appointed without any regard to worldly interest; any mixture of sinister and selfish motives? Till such a body can be found, it is ridiculous and unreasonable to urge *that* for a reason, which would compel you to dissociate yourself from every religious community upon earth.

But you give us a second reason, why the religious establishment of your Country was to be renounced; a reason founded, not on the accidental state of its Clergy, but on an innate, permanent evil in the Fabric itself. "When men come into a state of Death, ready to be deposited in the grave, whether in their lifetime they were believers or unbelievers, righteous or unrighteous, the Minister thanks God for receiving the soul of their dearly-beloved Brother departed, &c.* This hackneyed cavil would scarcely deserve notice, were it not that Dissenters of different denominations have long and often produced it against us, and instilled it as an early prejudice into the minds of their children, by Creeds and Catechisms. This

* Page 11.

part of a very fervent, scriptural and edifying service, is by no means indefensible. All adults who profess to be members of the Church of England, have taken upon themselves vows, the performance of which would prove them to be Christians indeed; we are therefore bound, in the judgment of Charity, to hope well of every Member of the Church of England, who has in Confirmation ratified the vows made for him at his Baptism, till we are obliged by clear evidence to form a different opinion of him. But you say that some of her members, who are considered as dearly-beloved Brethren departed, "have followed the most licentious and abandoned principles:"—Allowed. But how can we know that even such persons might not repent and seek mercy, and find it, like the penitent thief, in their last moments? I firmly believe that every impenitent unbelieving person, dying such, under the Gospel, will perish eternally: But I should think it great presumption to say, of this or that wicked individual, how little cause so ever he had left behind him for hope, that even with his expiring breath he cried for mercy through Christ,—“He is assuredly gone to Hell.”

But, without resting much weight on this argument; let us allow a very possible, and I greatly fear, a very common case; that a Clergyman is called to perform the Funeral Service, at the Burial of a wicked Man, dying in his sins: Even then, the Establishment is free from blame. Almost all those vices and acts of irreligion, which prove a Man to be wicked, are punishable by Law. They ought to be punished. Discipline ought to be restored, as in the primitive times. The Church * and all her serious Children lament that it is not. If wicked men were proceeded against for their vices and ungodliness, they would either be brought to shew satisfactory marks of penitence, and then the Minister might perform the Service, at their Interment, with propriety and pleasure; or else they would be cast out of the Church, and then he would not be called upon to perform it, at their Funeral, at all. The Church therefore is perfectly consistent with herself. And will any one say, because a Church Service, calculated for the living, and not at all affecting the dead, is sometimes, through a decay of discipline, necessarily performed over the remains of a person, whose case it may not represent, that therefore this is a solid and binding reason why

* See the Address in the Communion Service.

that Church is to be deserted? In other words, is a defect in the *administration* of good Laws and Institutions, in some inconsiderable instance, a sufficient cause why those Laws should be abolished and those Institutions overturned? If it was necessary for *you* to leave the Church of England on this account, it would be necessary for all. But if such conduct, under such circumstances, be necessary for all, then it will follow, that no permanent Government, or Religious Establishment, or Association whatever, can exist; for there never was a civil or ecclesiastical polity, in the execution of whose Laws and Discipline no defects were visible.

Upon the whole then, I would appeal to any disinterested judge, whether these two reasons (and these are the only or the principal reasons adduced) are sufficient to convert that proceeding, which would have otherwise been, without question, the sin of *schism*, into an act of *necessary duty*? Nay I will go further and say, that if this be all that you could produce, as a plea for forsaking the Church of England, at the time of your separation, it is from the pen of an enemy, one of the warmest testimonies, in favour of her excellence, which I wish to see,

2. Having examined your reasons for forsaking the *worship* of God in the Church of England, (a step which soon led, as was to be expected, to your renunciation of her *Doctrines* too) it may not be foreign from my design, before I proceed to contrast your present system with ours, to ascertain what are the qualifications necessary for the proper investigation of religious Truth.

I have already observed that real Christianity is not like a science, or a secret in nature, the reward of laborious enquiry, the deduction of reasoning, or the result of experiment, but a system of Truths revealed to us from Heaven, and at once complete, intelligible, and beyond the ability of man to improve. Agreeably to this idea of religion, we find that the scriptures, in calling us to become wise unto salvation, insist not so much upon power of intellect, and high cultivation of the reasoning faculties, as upon a certain disposition of heart, by no means necessarily combined with strength of mind, but to be found alike with it, or without it—I mean HUMILITY; a diffident, teachable spirit, which, humbly conscious of its own ignorance and weakness and liability to mistake, looks up to God for light and direction, and meekly receives the Truth of him with implicit faith.

Humility is thus insisted upon, and approved in the word of God. "The Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."* "To this man will I look, even to him who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my Word."† "Be not wise in thine own eyes."‡ "Lean not to thine own understanding."§ "Blessed are the poor in spirit."|| "I thank thee O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent; and hast revealed them unto babes."** "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise"†† "The meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way,‡‡ &c. &c. Now, how do these texts apply to your Spirit and Sentiments? Is there in your process, or in your publication, (I dont say any avowed profession of humility, for it is in the very nature of Christian Humility not to be ready to discover, much less to speak highly of itself, but) any proof, any symptom of Humility? On the contrary, it is the very genius and characteristic of your principles, that they proclaim aloud the sufficiency of man, and lead him to boast and be confident. Is it

* James iv. 6. † Isaiah lxvi. 2. ‡ Proverbs iii. 7.

§ Proverbs iii. 5. || Matt. v. 3. ** Ibid xi. 25.

†† 1 Cor. iii. 18. ‡‡ Psalm xxv. 9.

a mark of Humility, that a "few illiterate men" shall not only reject Doctrines which have been held for true, and embraced as highly valuable and necessary, by many of the most unprejudiced, cautious, wise and excellent men that ever lived; but also shall declare the espousers of some of these Doctrines to have lost sight of common sense,* express their astonishment that such Doctrines could possibly be embraced by honest men,† and quote texts which they are sure such men did neither understand nor believe.‡ Is it a mark of your Humility that, after every change you made in Religion, you were sure you were right,§ and have as often acknowledged by a further change that you had always been wrong; and that at this moment you are more confident than ever? Is it a mark of your Humility, that you engross to your opinions the exclusive title of "Rational Truth,||" and thereby leave only this alternative to be inferred:—that they who differ from you *have no reason, or do not use it!*

It is time that the province of reason should be defined. Reason, unbiassed reason, (if such there be,) may lawfully exercise her powers in examining the evidences for the divine origin

* Page 115. † Ibid 109. ‡ Ibid 111. § Ibid 6 and 2.

|| Page 22.

and authenticity of the Scriptures. When that is done, and the mind is satisfied that the Bible is the unadulterated word of God, the duty of reason then is to sit down with the simplicity of a child, and to receive, by faith, most unreservedly, all things that are revealed, whether it can fully comprehend them or not. But reason, in your system, exalts itself into the throne of God, and ventures to decide, not what is revealed and what not; but what is *proper* to be revealed and what *improper*. For a great part of your objections are raised against the doctrines we hold, not so much because such doctrines do not appear to be revealed, as because they would be "irrational," "inconsistent with your ideas of God, &c." and therefore cannot, you say in effect, * be revealed. You thus determine, *a priori*, what the Bible ought to contain, and what it ought not, and then proceed to examine it. Your reason sits as judge upon what God ought to reveal, and what he ought not; for you will allow nothing to be revealed by him which does not appear consistent with your reason. But is there humility, is there reason in this, when you are surrounded with phenomena in God's creation

* See page 60, 61, 62, 63, 85, &c. of Narrative.

and ways, wherever you turn your thoughts, of which your reason cannot discover the propriety and consistency?

Such a disposition, if indulged in religious speculations, is certain to carry a man astray. It will invariably incline him to reject every thing which has a tendency to humble the pride of merit, or the pride of reason. On this principle, not only the many changes you have made in religion, but also the *order* in which you have proceeded through them, may be explained. Had you, with such a self-sufficient spirit, set out from Socinianism, and now found yourselves amongst the humble adorers of a crucified Saviour, coming near to the Throne of Grace through him, to obtain Mercy and find Grace to help you in every time of need, I should have confessed myself utterly at a loss to account for the prodigy. Is it then cruelty or kindness to remind you here, that even in the Socinian Creed there are difficulties which reason cannot comprehend? Doctrines must present themselves to you, which, if examined *philosophically*, with your "*expanded powers*,"* will seem "irrational, and inconsistent with your ideas of God." You will not therefore do full

* Page 22.

justice to your talents and principles, till you discard the light of Revelation altogether ; and,

Spike up your inch of Reason on the point
Of philosophic Wit, *called* Argument,
And then exulting in your taper, cry,
“ BEHOLD THE SUN,” and, Indian-like, adore.

YOUNG.

3. Before, however, you resolve to deviate farther from the good “old path,” it would not be irrational for you to pause a moment, and examine what you have already gained in point of *propriety*, *comfort*, and *safety* ; * by contrasting your present system with that which you have forsaken. It cannot be disputed, that the claim to *propriety* is due to that system which is best calculated to give Glory to God and debase the pride of sinful Man. God is worthy to receive Glory. Our Redemption and Calling, by Jesus Christ, were intended to be “to the praise of his Glory.”† We have nothing

* Of the comparative *moral* tendency of the Socinian and Orthodox Doctrines, I need not here say much. This important view of the subject has been ably, may I not say, irrefragably discussed, by A. Fuller, in a Book, entitled, “The Calvinistic and Socinian system compared ;” a work which I beg leave earnestly to recommend to all who wish to embrace that System of Religion, which is best calculated to produce Glory to God, and Holiness in Man.

† Ephes. i. 6, 12, 14.

that we did not receive, wherefore then should we boast as if we had not received it? * We find an Apostle glorying in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him; † asserting that by the Grace of God he was what he was; ‡ renouncing his own righteousness altogether, and dependent solely on the righteousness of Christ; § affirming that all boasting is excluded; || and contending that no flesh must Glory in the presence of God, ** but that he that glorieth, must Glory in the Lord. ††

Now, in making the application, need it be asked, whether system provides more effectually for the glory of God? We apprehend that we have not a more humbling view of the state of human nature and the human race than is just; but we absolve God from being the author of so much guilt and misery. We conceive that whatever we are or hope for, we owe all to the grace and mercy of God, and are willing to lay all the honor of our salvation from sin and misery down at the Lord's feet, saying, "not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but unto thy name give the glory." †† And the Redeemed in Heaven are represented as ascribing all the glory

* 1 Cor. iv. 7. † 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

§ Phil. iii. 9. || Rom. iii. 27. ** 1 Cor. i. 29.

†† 1 Cor. i. 31. †† Psalm cxv. 1.

to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, in everlasting hallelujahs.* But your system cannot be bowed down to speak any such language. It boasts the all-sufficiency of your moral powers, and therefore leaves with you the whole power and will to know and embrace the things of God, as well as to reject them. It ascribes all the merit of turning to God to your own wisdom, virtue, and resolution. The glory therefore is yours.

Again, though you speak of forgiveness of sins, you make the main condition of God's pardoning mercy to be sincere repentance and obedience.† Now if obedience be the main condition of forgiveness, and if obedience be a man's own unassisted performance, he hath whereof to glory before God. Having done that of himself, which is the meritorious condition of God's favor, the merit of his salvation is so far his own. Your system, then, teaches you not to "glory in your infirmities," but in your strength and powers; not "in the righteousness of another," but in your own. And if so, it is productive of a gross impropriety, by detracting from God, and appropriating to yourselves that glory which the Orthodox

* See Rev. v. 6 to the end. vii. 9—12. and xii. 10, 11.

† Page 79.

system ascribes to him, and which he declares "he will not give to another."

It may further be observed, that our system glorifies God's attributes of holiness and justice and faithfulness, as well as his mercy, and magnifies his law; but yours reduces God to little more than an idol of mercy, and teaches that God forgives sinners without punishing their sins, which is contrary to his own express declarations.

But, perhaps, yours is a more *comfortable* system than ours. A Reader of your Publication, unacquainted with the nature of Evangelical Truth, and the power of real Religion, might be led to pity all such as have not yet entered into that "composure and tranquillity of mind,"* which is the result, you inform us, of embracing your present principles. He might conclude, from what you give us as the exercises of your mind, previous to this happy event, that the Religion of serious, orthodox Christians, in general, is no other than a wild and tumultuous sensation of impulses and impressions; of rapturous fervours, or more commonly of gloomy despondencies. I

have already sufficiently shewn how far this is from being a true state of the case. The Faith and Hope, which I have described, are dependent on no such visionary foundations. The principal evidence, which the generality of true Christians have for the reality of their faith and the safety of their state, is of a more substantial, and abiding nature. I grant that the best of them have their intervals of sorrow and sometimes of dejection, but what serious, conscientious person can be altogether without such feelings? Every sincere self-observer must be continually sensible of sin and defect in himself. Conscience must then accuse him. And, till relieved in the way which the Gospel prescribes, if he be not humbled in his mind, because he has sinned against the Lord, nor distressed lest "God should cast him away from his presence and take his Holy Spirit from him,"* I envy him not his "composure and tranquillity of mind."

You lay no claim to consolation on the ground of freedom from sin. "You confess that men are sinners and need forgiveness of sins; and you consider the Gospel to be good news, as it publishes forgiveness of sins."† So far we are agreed: And the question now is, whe-

* Psalm li. 11. † Page 94.

ther your system or ours is calculated to afford more solid and abiding comfort to a sinner? You maintain that "a sinner must wash out his sins by unfeigned repentance and contrition,* and by sincerely obeying the precepts of the Gospel." † But a person who is well acquainted with his own character and God's law, does not find any such declaration given in the Scriptures, nor would he think it very consolatory if it were discoverable. If he were sincere, his repentance would appear to him so defective, and his obedience so imperfect, that he would fear they could not be accepted in atonement for his numberless and aggravated sins. His only means to preserve composure and tranquillity of mind would be to attend to his sins and defects as little as possible, and to

* Page 105, also 95.

† Page 79. You tell us that one grand condition of Divine favour is that Men sincerely obey the Gospel of Christ. Page 104, We read that *virtue*, which I apprehend is the same as sincere obedience to the word of God, "is not the cause but the effect of our receiving the mercy of God." Now these two declarations make your system as inconsistent as it is comfortless: inconsistent, because in one place you make that the condition which you afterwards describe as the effect; comfortless, because if virtue or sincere obedience be after all the grand condition of Divine favor and forgiveness then "as it requires time, before it can be effected, if it can be effected at all, the person who would attempt it may be taken out of the land of the living."*

* See Page 103 of Narrative.

resolve to hope for forgiveness even when evidence seemed direct against him. Does this system convey consolation to a humble sinner, like that which a cordial belief of the following passages is able to inspire? "There is redemption through the Blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins."* "He has made peace through the blood of his cross."† "We are reconciled to God by the death of his Son."‡ "Whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins."§ "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that *justifieth* the *ungodly*, his faith is counted to him for righteousness."|| "Being justified," not by repentance and obedience, but "by faith," (attended indeed by repentance, and afterwards productive of obedience) "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Lastly, then, is yours the *safer* system? Should our hopes of being saved by virtue of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of being now benefitted by his intercession in Heaven, be found at the last day to be, as you represent them, unscriptural and vain; our case would be still as good as yours. We hold repentance and holiness to be as essential to the Christian character as you do; and it has never been

* Eph. i. 7. † Col. i. 20. ‡ Rom. v. 10. § Acts x. 43.
|| Rom. iv. 5. ** Rom. v. 1.

attempted to be shewn that serious, orthodox Christians have been exceeded by the advocates for Socinianism in morality and practical Religion. On the contrary it is allowed by Dr. Priestley, that "a great number of Unitarians are without much practical Religion, and have a greater conformity to the world apparent in them, than there is in others."*

Orthodox Christians have, to say the least then, all that you have, to recommend them to the Divine favour, if their great "Foundation" should fail them. Should he whom they worship, as their Lord and their God, be found to be no more than Man, they have only to answer for the additional sin of idolatry, to the commission of which there is confessedly such temptation given in God's word, that if any offence is less aggravated than another, it would be this. Even in committing this sin, they might, upon your system, which is here supposed to be the true one, and which makes repentance and sincere obedience the meritorious condition of pardon, strongly hope for forgiveness; since they have repented and sincerely obeyed the Gospel. And then their re-

* Discourses on various subjects, page 100.

pentance and obedience would do as much for them as yours would do for you.

But if you be found wrong, you are wrong not by *excess* but by *defect*. You have nothing that will supply the place of Christ's sacrifice for sin: nothing that will redeem your guilty souls, and make atonement to God for them. To all your other sins (not one of them blotted out from the Book of God's remembrance) will be added that of "having troden under foot the Son of God," so far as he is the Son of God, "of having counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith" you might have been "sanctified" from all your sins, "an unholy" inefficacious "thing," and of having "done despite to the spirit of Grace." Who then is the *rational, enlightened* Man? Every humble and unprejudiced Reader, will, I have little doubt, see, that neither all Scripture nor all Reason, is on your side. To guard such persons from being imposed upon and seduced, is the principal object I have in view, in writing this. I scarcely can indulge a hope of succeeding with any of your body, in bringing them back "to the acknowledgement of the Truth." Minds so given to change, so elated with self-sufficiency, are ill prepared to listen to arguments and proof, in favor

* Heb. x. 29.

of principles which they glory in having renounced. It may be "you would have little honour to lose,"* should you be brought to abjure your present views and return to the Doctrines you oppose; but you would, if honest men, have the declaration to make, that at a time when you were most confident of your being right, you have been found to be most fatally wrong, and this to persons aspiring to the high-sounding titles of "rational Men and Philosophers" would be a humbling confession, whether "their hands minister to their necessities,"† or their writings occupy an elevated rank amongst the productions of Genius and Learning.

Should you be induced to offer any thing further to the Public, in support of your principles and conduct, as Dissenters, as Baptists, or as Socinians, I shall only consider myself called upon to notice it provided you do not, as most of your predecessors in the controversy have done, when expelled from one position, rally in another, but keep the ground you already occupy, and fairly meet the arguments which have been advanced, in defence of the Doctrines you oppose. Any thing short of an attempt at a *full refutation* of what I have advanced, under the

* Page 7th of Preface to Narrative.

† Page 2d of Preface to Narrative.

several constituent parts of the subjects at issue between us, will be treated with silent disregard. Should such an attempt be made, we may also expect, in vindication of your late Publication, that you will have the goodness to favor the world with your authority for saying "that Infant Baptism is but a tradition of men:" You will shew that there is not only no direct, or constructive command in Scripture for Infants to be baptized; no evidence of their having been baptized; but also that there is some *positive* injunction that they should *not* be baptized; some satisfactory proof that they were not baptized by the Apostles and first Christians: After succeeding in this, you will further inform us, when this corruption *first* insinuated itself into the Church, and you will account for its obtaining at so *early a period* as that in which we have *undeniable proof* that it was in use, *without opposition, without complaint, without notice.*

I am, &c.
4 Oct 58



W. Blanchard, Printer, York.

ERRATA.

Page 12 . . . Line 9 . . . read the *comma* after *other*.

— 21 . . . — 8 . . . for *Is. iv. 46.* read *Is. xlv. 6.*

— 32 . . . — 18 . . . for *Epistles*, read *Epistle*.

Note— 51 . . . — 2 . . . after *insinuate* read (*Page 112*)

— 66 . . . — 11 . . . for *have* read *batb*.

References 67 for *Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 37, 14.*
read *Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Ibid. xxxvii. 14.* also,
for *Zeck.* read *Zech.*

ATTENTION

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